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Part IV: Politics and Mass Media.

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Voter Learning in the 1990 Off-Year Election: Did the Media Matter?

by David Weaver and Dan Drew

School of Journalism
Indiana University
Ernie Pyle Hall
Bloomington, IN 47405

812-855-9247

Presented to the Mass Communication & Society Division, Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, at the August 1991 AEJMC convention in Boston, Massachusetts. Dan Drew is professor of journalism at Indiana University, where David Weaver is the Roy W. Howard Research Professor. The authors appreciate the assistance of doctoral student Lars Willnat, the students in the fall 1990 public opinion class, the Indiana University Center for Survey Research, and the University Academic Computing Services.

Voter Learning in the 1990 Off-Year Election: Did the Media Matter?

Presidential elections in the United States have been far more extensively studied than have those that occur in other, so-called "off" years, both by mass communication scholars and political scientists. Likewise, off-year elections usually don't generate nearly as much interest or coverage by journalists as do the quadrennial presidential contests. This is understandable, given the numbers of people participating in and affected by national presidential elections, but it can result in misleading generalizations about the impact of mass media in U.S. elections, especially when one considers that there are many more local and state elections than truly national ones.

In a study of voter learning during the 1988 presidential election, Drew and Weaver found that debate viewing, level of education, and interest in the campaign were significant predictors of knowledge about the presidential candidates' positions on issues.[1] But viewing debates and paying attention to election news were not predictors of the images of the candidates held by voters. Instead, self-reported political party identification was the strongest predictor of whether survey respondents considered George Bush or Michael Dukakis experienced, compassionate, patriotic, honest, or in touch with people.

The findings regarding knowledge about candidate issue positions in the 1988 presidential election were similar to those for other presidential elections,[2] especially those with regard to the debates.[3] But would such findings hold for an off-year election as well?

There are some indications from other studies that they might. Berkowitz and Pritchard found, in a survey during a 1986 Indiana congressional election campaign, that reliance on newspapers significantly predicted a person's ability to compare the positions of the candidates on different issues, as did political interest, age and education.[4] They did not test the effects of media reliance on perceived images of the candidates, however. Choi and Becker also found that newspaper reading increased voters' ability to discriminate between issue positions of candidates in a 1982 Iowa gubernatorial campaign, strengthening confidence in voting decisions, but television news viewing did not.[5] Choi and Becker concluded that newspaper reading also increased voters' ability to discriminate between the images of the candidates, but they did not attempt to directly predict the actual images of the candidates that voters held.

Purpose of this Study

This study measures how much voters in one Midwestern city and state learned about the issue positions of two 1990 senatorial candidates, and what images of these candidates they formed from campaign coverage and other information. Like the 1988 study, it focuses on predictors of issue knowledge and image perceptions to systematically assess the relative contribution of exposure and attention to news media coverage and other influences, especially in light of criticism of media coverage of this campaign.

We were particularly interested in seeing if exposure and attention to news media predicted issue knowledge and candidate images when level of education, interest in the campaign, political party identification, and other possible influences were controlled. We could not include debate viewing as a predictor, even though there was one televised debate between the two senatorial candidates four days before the election, because so few people watched the debate (13% in the city sample, and only 9% in the statewide sample). But we were able to do separate analyses of both city and statewide data before and after this debate occurred to test for possible indirect effects of the debate.

The 1990 senatorial election studied here occurred in the state of Indiana. The two leading candidates were Democrat Baron Hill, a four-term

Democratic state representative from the southern Indiana city of Seymour, and Republican Dan Coats, an incumbent U.S. senator who was appointed to former Senator Dan Quayle's seat when Quayle was elected Vice President in 1988. Coats worked as an aide to Quayle before moving into Quayle's former U.S. House seat to represent Fort Wayne, Indiana, for eight years. Both candidates were campaigning in their first statewide election. Coats began airing TV commercials just months after he was appointed senator in December 1988, whereas Hill did not begin his campaign until October 1989 and lagged far behind Coats in raising and spending campaign funds.

Hill called for a national health insurance plan and increased spending on the poor and elderly. He criticized acceptance of speaking fees by members of Congress and supported federal family leave legislation. Coats criticized Hill as being part of a liberal tax and spend group, and Coats co-sponsored a Senate bill to ban out-of-state garbage dumping.

A statewide telephone survey of 802 registered voters conducted September 10-12, 1990, by the Gordon S. Black Corporation for The Indianapolis Star showed Hill to be a distant second to Coats in voter preference (57% for Coats vs. 26% for Hill, with 17% undecided), despite early publicity for Hill for his walk across the state and his series of televised ads in August 1990. During the campaign period from early September until election day on November 6, 1990, Hill made impressive gains against Coats, but still lost the election with 47% of the vote compared to 53% for Coats. Hill's challenge to Coats was called "surprisingly stiff" by the Associated Press.[6]

News media coverage of this Indiana Senate contest was generally sparse, and early on it focused on who was ahead and by how much (the horse race) rather than on differences in issue positions of the two leading candidates, Coats and Hill. A September 16, 1990, front-page story in The Indianapolis Star was headlined "Coats has big lead over Hill; But voters indicate they can be swayed." This story was based on the statewide survey of voters mentioned above. A story in the Indiana Daily Student on September 21 focused on Baron Hill's dive into Lake Michigan after finishing his 400-mile walking campaign across Indiana. Another story in the Star on September 24, based on the Gordon Black poll compared the popularity of Coats and Hill with four other Indiana politicians.

There was some issue-related coverage in October, with stories about Coats' co-sponsorship of a bill to enhance the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the differences in approaches of the candidates to cutting the federal budget deficit, and the position of the Libertarian Pary candidate on legalization of marijuana. But even late in the campaign, the longest, most prominent stories were about Hill walking around downtown Bloomington hunting votes and about Coats not being able to leave Washington to campaign in Indiana because of the Congressional debates over the budget.

On October 29, about a week before the election, the Star ran a front-page banner story based on a late October poll showing Coats 27 points ahead of Hill. There was some issue-oriented coverage of the televised debate between Coats and Hill on November 2, especially on the public broadcasting radio station in Bloomington.

In short, the media coverage of this off-year campaign was much less frequent, and probably less issue-oriented, than the typical coverage of a presidential campaign.

Previous Studies of Media Influence in Elections

The effects of mass media coverage on elections have been systematically studied in this country since the 1940 presidential election when Paul Lazarsfeld and his associates carried out their famous Erie County study, but as noted above, very few studies have been done of media effects on non-presidential elections.[7] The Erie County and other earlier studies focused on opinion change during presidential election campaigns and generally found little media influence on political opinions, other than reinforcement of existing feelings. As concern with opinions and persuasion gave way to studies of awareness and learning of political information in the 1970s, stronger media effects were found, but they were mainly confined to awareness of which issues were most salient, who was winning and losing, and how candidates fought political battles.[8] And, for the most part, these were studies of presidential elections.

Graber notes that three of four answers people give when asked what they have learned about candidates and issues concern personality traits.[9] She argues that people are interested in the human qualities of their elected leaders--particularly their trustworthiness, character, strength and compassion--and the media provide ample information on these traits. But she acknowledges that although election news stresses personality traits over issues, it does supply a fair amount of issue coverage.[10] This specific information on issues may be quickly forgotten by many people, but politically significant feelings and opinions based on these facts may be remembered long after the facts have been forgotten, and may influence voting decisions.

Writing of media effects in general, Graber concludes, "Media influence is greatest in informing people and creating initial attitudes; it is least effective in changing attitudes and ingrained behaviors."[11]

Hypotheses

Given the findings of these previous studies, we predicted:

(1) Attention to election news in the media will significantly predict greater knowledge of candidates' issue positions, in spite of rather sparse coverage of issues during the campaign.

(2) Political party identification will significantly predict voter images of the two senatorial candidates, but media exposure and attention to election news will not.

Methodology

These hypotheses were tested in two separate surveys conducted during the fall 1990 U.S. senatorial election in Indiana, one survey using a statewide sample of voting age adults and the other using a local sample of adults in Bloomington, a university community with a population of 60,000. The state data were collected as part of a telephone survey conducted by the Indiana University Center for Survey Research. Telephone numbers were randomly generated by a computer using random digit dialing and a random procedure to select those interviewed in each household. After a pretest, interviews were conducted by paid, trained interviewers between October 23 and December 2, 1990. A total of 754 interviews were completed, resulting in a response rate of 57 percent. Although this response rate is not as high as we would prefer, it is consistent with declining survey response rates nationally and identical with those reported recently for the Midwest.[12]

The local survey was conducted as part of class project by students enrolled in a public opinion course. A systematic random sample drawn from the Bloomington telephone directory yielded 282 completed interviews for a response rate of 57 percent. After pretesting and interviewer training, the interviews were completed between October 30 and November 5, 1990. In order to randomize respondents within households, interviewers asked to talk to the person in the household over 18 years of age who had the next birthday. Both samples were compared with U.S. Census data on age and gender, and no variations of more than 5 points were found. In both samples, women tended to be a bit overrepresented (55% in the Indiana Poll and 56% in the Bloomington city survey), and older people were slightly overrepresented as well, but not enough to justify weighting the data in our opinion, especially given our interest in relationships rather than descriptive statistics.

The measures included in this study were identical for both surveys, and they include several independent variables -- demographic characteristics, media use, media attention, vote intention, and political discussion -- that were used to predict two dependent variables: (1) knowledge about candidate stands on issues, and (2) candidate images held by potential voters.

Predictor Variables. The demographic section of the questionnaires asked about the highest grade completed in school, age, and gender. In addition, respondents were asked to describe their political leaning as Democrat, Republican, Independent, or other.

A second set of questions attempted to gauge involvement in the campaign by asking about political discussion and vote intention. One asked, "How often, if at all, do you discuss politics with other people?" and offered four categories of response, ranging from "five or more times a week" to "less often than once a week." Vote intention was measured by asking: "How likely is it that you will vote in the upcoming elections?" A four-point scale ranging from "very likely" to "very unlikely" measured responses.

The mass media variables measured both exposure and attention for each medium. Exposure questions asked, for example, "About how many days a week do you read one of the local newspapers?" After each exposure item, another question asked about attention. All used the following form: "How much attention do you pay to news stories about current election campaigns when you read the paper?" The attention measures offered four responses, ranging from "a lot of attention" to "no attention." The questionnaire repeated this pattern for local newspapers, non-local newspapers, local TV news, network TV news, radio news and campaign commercials on television.

There were two differences, however, in the media questions asked in the state and city surveys. The radio attention and exposure items were not included in the questionnaire for the state sample, nor was the exposure question for non-local newspapers. The reason was both theoretical and economic. The election effects literature provided no reason to think radio or use of non-local newspapers would be a significant factor, and inclusion of questions in the state survey was expensive.

Dependent Variables. Four questions about the positions the two leading senatorial candidates had taken on specific campaign issues measured knowledge of issues. The topics were taken from news media campaign coverage and included stands on a national health care policy, acceptance of speaking fees by senators, legislation mandating family leaves, and federal laws permitting bans on out-of-state garbage dumping. All knowledge questions used the following form: "Which candidate, Dan Coats or Baron Hill, has said he favors a national health care policy?" Correct answers were summed to form an issue knowledge scale. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was .69 for the local survey and .57 for the state survey. These reliabilities are lower than we had hoped for, primarily because some knowledge questions were more difficult to answer than others, creating a cumulative or Guttman scale pattern. Nevertheless, the face validity of these items argued for combining them into a composite measure of knowledge, even though that resulted in more conservative correlations and regression coefficients in our analyses.

We measured candidate image by asking the same set of three questions about each candidate. The questionnaire items probed opinions about three personal qualities: trustworthiness, competence, and being in touch with a variety of people. The first two were taken from literature which suggests that these are human qualities people are most concerned about in an election campaign,[13] and the third was a quality raised during the campaign.

The interviewer asked respondents to rate one candidate on all three characteristics and then to rate the other candidate on the same three qualities. Here is an example of question wording: "How would you rate Dan Coats on competence? Would you say that Coats is: very competent, somewhat competent, somewhat incompetent, or very incompetent?" The items were then combined to form an average image score for each candidate. Reliability coefficients were computed for each candidate's image scale for each of the two surveys, and they ranged from .72 to .67, a bit lower than we would like, but not so low as to rule out combining these measures into composite image scales. As above, the effect of lower reliabilities is to lower the maximum possible correlations and regression coefficients, making the tests of the hypotheses more conservative.

Data Analysis. To check the predictive power of media measures on knowledge of candidates' stands on issues and on candidate images, a hierarchical regression analysis was run with separate blocks of independent variables--(1) demographics and political party identification, (2) vote intention and political discussion, and (3) media exposure/attention. In addition, attention to radio news was run as a separate block in the data from the local survey after preliminary data analysis indicated it was a significant predictor. We wanted to see if it remained a statistically significant predictor even after variance from the other media exposure/attention measures was removed.

The data analysis also included three regression runs for each survey. First, we looked at the results provided by the total sample from each of the surveys. Then we divided the respondents from each survey into two groups for further analysis: those interviewed before the debate between the two candidates on Friday evening, November 2, just a few days before election day (Tuesday, November 6), and those interviewed after the debate. As mentioned above, only a small percentage of those in our samples watched the debate. However, the debate was the main event in the campaign, and it suddenly focused attention on issues and qualifications of the two senatorial candidates. Also, it generated considerable media coverage, a factor that we thought might strengthen media influence after the debate.

We compared the responses of the pre-debate and post-debate groups for the smaller city sample on a number of items to check for differences between the two groups. The analysis -- using crosstabs or t-tests, depending on level of measurement -- showed no significant differences between the groups in terms of gender, political ideology, education, frequency of discussion of politics, political interest, media exposure and attention, or issue knowledge.

We analyzed 18 regression equations: one for each of the three dependent variables (issue knowledge, the Republican candidate's image, and the Democratic candidate's image), for each of three time periods (total campaign, pre-debate period and post-debate period), for each of two surveys (statewide and citywide).

Findings

Issue Knowledge. Overall, knowledge about the candidates' stands on the issues was poor. Some 44 percent of the Bloomington city sample could not answer any of the questions correctly, a number that seems very high, considering one had a 50 percent chance of guessing a correct answer. About 21 percent were able to answer one question correctly, while 16 percent answered two questions, 14 percent answered three, and less than five percent were able to answer all four questions correctly. The statewide sample percentages were very close to these, not differing in any case by more than 3 points. Average levels of issue knowledge held by the pre-debate and post-debate samples did not show any significant differences for either the state or city samples. This suggests that the debate, and the media coverage it generated, had little aggregate impact on the overall level of issue information held by the electorate in Bloomington or in the state of Indiana as a whole.

The regression equations show that four variables were significant predictors of issue learning for the total sample in the state survey. (See Table 1.) Two were demographic measures -- younger people were more likely to score higher than older people, and males were slightly more likely to score higher than females. Two media measures were associated with knowledge of candidate stands on issues -- having seen a campaign ad on television and attention to campaign news in newspapers.

Table 1 About Here

When the sample is subdivided, an identical pattern holds for the post-debate period, but having seen a television commercial is the only predictor for the pre-debate period. Thus, although the overall knowledge level didn't increase significantly after the debate, different influences were at work during those two time periods.

The data for the total Bloomington city sample show results that are somewhat different from the state sample. (See Table 2.) Males did better than females on the issue knowledge scale, and attention to campaign commercials helped learning. However, age did not show up as a significant predictor, and the pattern of media influence was somewhat different. Non-local newspaper attention rather than local newspaper exposure helped issue knowledge, and attention to radio news was an unusually strong influence.

Table 2 About Here

We suspect that these media differences are related to the fact that Bloomington is a university town. Those who read regional newspapers tend to be more highly educated and usually more attuned to political issues. Also, the only radio station in town to give significant coverage to any news, let alone political news, was the public radio station. A content analysis of the station's campaign news shows that the coverage before the debate focused on the debate itself as a political event and on the backgrounds of the candidates. Stories aired after the debate, which was carried live by the public radio station, directly compared the candidates' stands on specific issues.

When the sample is subdivided, the pattern of influence for the pre-debate period is similar to that of the total sample (in terms of Beta weights) but the equations are not significant, probably because of the reduced sample size. The post-debate period does show some significant differences, however. Political discussion becomes a significant predictor, as does radio exposure and radio attention. This suggests that the debates generated both discussion and radio coverage of issues in Bloomington during the final days of the campaign, and these in turn increased knowledge about the candidates among those attending to radio news and discussing the campaign with others.

Candidate Images. When the overall image scores for the two candidates before and after the debates are compared, significant differences appear in the state sample. The average score for the Republican incumbent (Coats) rose from 4.8 to 5.0 (t-test $p<.05$). The overall score of the Democratic challenger (Hill) also became more positive, rising from 4.3 to 4.6 (t-test $p<.02$). Perceived images of the candidates did not change during this time period in the local Bloomington survey.

For all respondents in the statewide survey, issue knowledge was the only significant predictor of Democrat Hill's image, indicating that those who knew his stands on the issues also held a more positive image of him.

(See Table 3.)

Table 3 About Here

When the sample is subdivided, no significant predictors appear in the pre-debate period, although the Betas suggest reduced sample size is the reason issue knowledge is not a significant predictor here. In the post-debate period, local newspaper exposure is the only item associated with a more positive image of Hill, supporting a tendency for those who knew more about Hill, a relative unknown, to have a more favorable image of him.

The pattern of predictors is similar for Hill's image in the Bloomington city survey. Issue knowledge is the strongest predictor, followed by intention to vote in the election. As predicted, the media exposure and attention measures do not add significantly to the variance explained in Hill's image. (See Table 4.) In fact, issue knowledge is significant in both of the subsamples. It is the only significant factor in the pre-debate period, while discussion of politics appears as a negative factor in the post-debate period, suggesting that those who discussed Hill's qualifications were more likely to have an unfavorable image of him than those who didn't talk much about the campaign.

Table 4 About Here

Issue knowledge is also one of two significant predictors of Republican Coat's image in the Indiana statewide sample. The other was identifying oneself as a Republican, as predicted from our previous study of the 1988 presidential election.[14] (See Table 5.) For the pre-debate period, issue knowledge and intention to vote are the significant predictors. The picture changes somewhat for the post-debate period, however, when voting intention becomes a negative factor, along with exposure to local television news. Political knowledge, being a Republican, and reading a local newspaper are all associated with a more positive image. The difference in signs between television and newspaper exposure suggests that Coats did not project an appealing image on television, possibly during the televised debate and the subsequent TV coverage of that debate.

Table 5 About Here

Data from the Bloomington city survey indicate that being a Republican was the only variable to have an impact on the image of Coats, as predicted earlier. (See Table 6.) No other variables show up as significant in either of the pre- and post-debate subsamples. Perhaps the more highly educated university community had already formed its image of the incumbent during the two years he had been in office.

Table 6 About Here

Conclusions

Contrary to the popular wisdom regarding the superficiality and emphasis on images of the 1990 off-year election news coverage, our study suggests that radio news, televised ads and regional newspapers were significant sources of information about the candidates' stands on issues for residents of Bloomington, Indiana. For Indiana residents in general, viewing TV ads and paying attention to newspaper coverage of the U.S. Senate campaign were significant predictors of knowing more about the candidates' issue positions. As hypothesized from previous research, then, media exposure and attention measures were significant predictors of knowledge about candidate issue stands in the 1990 off-year election, both for Bloomington and Indiana residents.

The finding that televised political ads contributed to increasing this knowledge for both city and statewide samples is consistent with Patterson and McClure's landmark study of the 1972 U.S. presidential election, which found that TV paid commercials did give voters serious information, but TV news coverage did not.[15] We find the same to be true for the 1990 off-year election in one state and city, even with the use of both exposure and attention measures for television news.

We also found that media exposure and attention measures were generally not significant predictors of candidate images, as we had predicted from previous studies. Instead, self-reported political party identification (only for Republicans) and knowledge of issue stands were the strongest predictors of whether potential voters considered Coats or Hill competent, trustworthy or in touch with a variety of people. Intention to vote also emerged as a significant predictor of a positive candidate image for Democrat Hill in the Bloomington sample, probably because of the large number of Democratic voters in this university town.

We did not expect knowledge of candidate issue positions to be a significant predictor of candidate image, but it supports a general tendency, found in earlier psychological research, for people to evaluate more positively that which is more familiar.[16] This is especially important in off-year elections, where the candidates are less well-known and are often trying to simply increase name recognition, as was the case with Democrat Baron Hill, who was relatively unkown as compared with Republican Dan Coats who had served in the U.S. Senate for two years and in the U.S. House for eight years.

Although the single televised debate between the two candidates did not increase overall issue knowledge levels in the two surveys, radio news exposure and frequency of discussion of politics became significant predictors of issue knowledge after the debate, suggesting that the debate had an indirect effect on knowledge about candidate issue stands by stimulating discussion and by changing the radio coverage of the campaign from campaign events and candidate backgrounds to issue stands of the two candidates. After the debate, local newspaper and television exposure also became significant predictors of candidate images, again suggesting indirect effects of the debate.

These findings suggest that in spite of the criticism of the superficial nature of the 1990 campaign coverage, it was useful in making many voters more aware of differences in issue positions of the candidates, even after age, gender, education, political views, interest in the election and frequency of discussion were controlled. Thus our findings reinforce those of studies of earlier presidential elections, especially the most recent one in 1988.

Our findings are limited geographically by our sample from one Midwestern city and state, and by the single-time survey design of our study. We cannot be sure that media exposure and attention cause an increase in issue knowledge among potential voters, because we cannot control time ordering with a survey taken at one point in time. But other studies of media effects using stronger panel and experimental designs have suggested such a causal influence. We can be reasonably sure that the associations between media exposure/attention and issue knowledge --and the lack of association between media measures and voter images of candidates--are not spurious, given the other possible influences we've controlled for in our regression analyses.

Notes

[1] Dan Drew and David Weaver, "Voter Learning in the 1988 Presidential Election: Did the Debates and the Media Matter?" Journalism Quarterly, 68 (Spring 1991), forthcoming.

[2] Doris A. Graber, Mass Media and American Politics, Third Edition (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1989)

[3] Kathleen Hall Jamieson and David S. Birdsell, Presidential Debates: The Challenge of Creating an Informed Electorate (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 127.

[4] Dan Berkowitz and David Pritchard, "Political Knowledge and Communication Resources," Journalism Quarterly, 66, 3 (Autumn 1989), pp. 697-701.

[5] Hyeon Cheol Choi and Samuel L. Becker, "Media Use, Issue/Image Discriminations, and Voting," Communication Research, 14, 3 (June 1987), pp. 267-291.

[6] Connie Case, Associated Press, "Coats narrowly retains Senate seat," The Herald-Times, Bloomington, Indiana, November 7, 1990, pp. C-1, C-5.

[7] Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948) reports on a benchmark panel study of the 1940 U.S. presidential election in which it was found that political coverage in mass media is most likely to activate latent predispositions, reinforce already held partisan views, and convert very few voters to switching parties (only about 8 percent of the voters surveyed in the 1940 election).

[8] Doris A. Graber, Mass Media and American Politics, Third Edition (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1989), p. 222.

[9] Graber, op. cit., p. 223.

[10] Graber, op. cit., p. 224.

[11] Graber, op. cit., p. 183.

[12] Randall Rothenberg, "Surveys Proliferate, but Answers Dwindle," The New York Times, October 5, 1990, pp. 1, A6.

[13] Doris A. Graber, Mass Media and American Politics. Third Edition (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1989), pp. 223-224.

[14] Drew and Weaver, "Voter Learning in the 1988 Presidential Election," op. cit.

[15] Thomas E. Patterson and Robert D. McClure, The Unseeing Eye: The Myth of Television Power in National Elections (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976)

[16] Robert B. Zajonc, "Attitudinal Effects of Mere Exposure," Journal of Social Psychology, Monograph Supplement 9, 1968, pp. 1-27.

Table 1
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of
Predictors of Issue Knowledge
(Indiana State Poll 1990 -- all respondents; n=545)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3
Republican	.04	.02	.02
Democrat	-.08	-.08	-.08
Age	-.01	-.04	-.11*
Gender (male)	.10*	.09*	.09*
Education	.07	.06	.02
Voting Intention		.05	.03
Discuss Politics		.18***	.08
Local TV Exposure			.06
Local NP Exposure			.01
NP Attention			.16**
TV Attention			.08
Seen TV Ad (y/n)			.21***
TV Ad Attention			-.07
R Square	.03	.06	.15
R Square Change	.03	.03	.09
Sig. of Change	.006	.0000	.0000

*<p.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 2
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of
Predictors of Issue Knowledge
(Bloomington City Survey 1990 -- all respondents; n=175)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4
Republican	.08	.07	.05	.05
Democrat	.11	.10	.10	.08
Age	-.07	-.11	-.15	-.14
Gender (male)	.16*	.13	.13	.15*
Education	.20**	.15*	.16*	.13
Vote Intention		.16*	.06	.05
Discuss Politics		.17*	.09	.08
Radio Exposure			.08	-.10
Local TV Exposure			.13	.16
Nat TV Exposure			-.06	-.04
Local NP Exposure			.01	.01
Regional NP Exposure			.15*	.15*
NP Attention			.12	.07
TV Attention			.04	-.02
TV Ad Attention			.17*	.16*
Radio Attention				.32***
R Square	.09	.16	.24	.29
R Square Change	.09	.06	.08	.05
Sig. of Change	.0048	.0021	.0302	.0011

*<p.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 3
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of
Predictors of Hill's Image
(Indiana State Poll 1990 -- all respondents; n=537)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3
Republican	-.05	-.06	-.06
Democrat	.02	.04	.04
Age	-.05	-.03	-.08
Gender (male)	.09*	.07	.07
Education	-.02	-.03	-.04
Voting Intention		-.08	-.09*
Discuss Politics		.02	-.01
Political Knowledge		.14**	.10*
Local TV Exposure			.05
Local NP Exposure			.08
NP Attention			.01
TV Attention			.03
Seen TV Ad (y/n)			.06
TV Ad Attention			-.02
R Square	.01	.04	.05
R Square Change	.01	.02	.02
Sig. of Change	.177	.0038	.187

*<p.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 4
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Hill's Image
(Bloomington City Survey 1990 -- all respondents; n-175)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4
Republican	.06	.03	.04	.04
Democrat	.15	.10	.11	.11
Age	-.09	-.11	-.15	-.15
Gender (male)	.09	.05	.06	.07
Education	.09	.02	.21	.01
Voting Intention		.15*	.10	.10
Discuss Politics		-.11	-.16*	-.16*
Political Knowledge		.32***	.30***	.29***
Radio Exposure			-.08	-.11
Local TV Exposure			-.08	-.07
Nat TV Exposure			.04	.04
Local NP Exposure			.16*	.16*
Regional NP Exposure			.05	.05
NP Attention			.01	-.01
TV Attention			.13	.12
TV Ad Attention			-.01	-.01
Radio Attention				.05
R Square	.04	.17	.22	.23
R Square Change	.04	.13	.05	.01
Sig. of Change	.167	.0000	.195	.611

*<p.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 5
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of
Predictors of Coats' Image
(Indiana State Poll 1990 -- all respondents; n=539)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3
Republican	.14**	.13**	.13**
Democrat	-.05	-.03	-.03
Age	.05	.07	.06
Gender (male)	-.03	-.04	-.05
Education	.08*	.08	.06
Voting Intention		-.04	-.06
Discuss Politics		-.04	-.06
Political Knowledge		.19***	.18***
Local TV Exposure			-.10*
Local NP Exposure			.07
NP Attention			.05
TV Attention			.07
Seen TV Ad (y/n)			.05
TV Ad Attention			-.05
R Square	.04	.07	.09
R Square Change	.04	.03	.02
Sig. of Change	.0007	.0002	.134

*<p.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 6
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of
Predictors of Coats' Image
(Bloomington City Survey 1990 -- all respondents; n=174)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4
Republican	.23*	.22*	.24*	.24*
Democrat	.04	.03	.06	.05
Age	.02	.01	-.01	-.01
Gender (male)	.07	.07	.11	.11
Education	-.12	-.12	-.11	-.12
Voting intention		.07	.02	.02
Discuss Politics		-.07	-.11	-.11
Political Knowledge		.02	-.01	-.02
Radio Exposure			-.06	-.09
Local TV Exposure			.08	.09
Nat TV Exposure			-.12	-.12
Local NP Exposure			.05	.05
Regional NP Exposure			.01	.01
NP Attention			.20*	.19
TV Attention			-.06	-.07
TV Ad Attention			-.01	-.01
Radio Attention				.04
R Square	.07	.08	.12	.12
R Square Change	.07	.01	.04	.001
Sig. of Change	.023	.752	.461	.699

*<p.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Televised Political Conventions as Pseudo-events: Proposals for More Substantive Campaign Coverage in 1992

John M. Arwood

University of Missouri-Columbia, 1991

There is something about a national convention that makes it as fascinating as a revival or a hanging. It is vulgar, it is ugly, it is stupid, it is tedious, it's hard upon both the cerebral centers and the gluteus maximus, and yet it is somehow charming. One sits through long sessions wishing heartily that all the delegates were dead and in hell -- and then suddenly there comes a show so gaudy and hilarious, so melodramatic and obscene, so unimaginably exhilarating and preposterous that one lives a gorgeous year in an hour.

H.L. Mencken, 1924

Keep it short, keep it bite-sized.

Kevin Sullivan,
Democratic speechwriter, 1988

Introduction

It has been 30 years since Daniel J. Boorstin coined the term "pseudo-event" to describe the substitution of image for reality in American life. In an expansive look at the substitution of illusions for reality in the fields of advertising, the news media, the arts and politics, he argued that "what ails us most is not what we have done with America, but what we have substituted for America." And he warned that unless Americans identify their illusions, "we will never discover our real problems" (Boorstin, 1972, p. 6).

Perhaps no ritual of American public life fits the term "pseudo-event" better than the spectacles that unfold every fourth summer, ostensibly for the purpose of nominating candidates for president of the United States. In truth they are no longer nominating conventions, since both major political parties now almost always decide their nominees during the primary season. Instead, their most important functions now are to ratify the decisions made by the voters during the primaries, and to present a favorable image to the public. They have become "television pilots that introduce the fall season's cast of characters" (L. Lichter & S. Lichter, 1988, p. 41).

The purpose of this paper is to trace the evolution of the conventions into pseudo-events, explore the implications this trend holds for American democracy, and offer some recommendations on how the television network news divisions might structure their convention coverage in order to more responsibly serve their audiences in the 1992 election.

The "television pilot" role for the convention is a fairly modern development, and parallels the increased presence -- and eventually, dominance -- of television in the convention hall.

In 1952, the first year television attempted to cover the conventions nationwide, the gatherings were anything but predictable. The Democrats took four ballots to decide on Adlai Stevenson as their nominee, and the Republican convention was marked by considerable suspense over whether Robert A. Taft could prevent Dwight D. Eisenhower from winning the nomination (Davis, 1983).

The conventions of 1988, by contrast, were carefully scripted and timed to fit the needs of prime time television. Paul Kirk, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, unabashedly called the Democratic gathering in Atlanta a "miniseries" (Kaus, 1988). And sure enough, the convention had its own "producer": Gary Smith, a partner in Smith-Hemion Productions, an Emmy Award-winning company that had put together "Baryshnikov on Broadway" and the 1986 Liberty Weekend gala for ABC (Unger, 1988). The production values of a show-biz extravaganza were everywhere: The traditional colors of red, white and blue were replaced with "salmon, eggshell, and azure," which supposedly looked better on color television. And of course, the national anthem was sung twice each day: once at the actual start of the proceedings, and once at the start of prime time (Kaus, 1988).

The Republican convention in New Orleans one month later was just as television-conscious. Lest the proceedings bog down, forcing carefully crafted speeches out of prime time, the "producers" stood ready to have the podium chairman gavel down any unscripted displays of enthusiasm in the crowd (Ingwerson, 1988)

Jay Rosen, a professor of journalism at New York University, wrote in the Los Angeles Times (1988) that "a political convention seems to be the purest example yet of the 'pseudo-event,' an excuse to gain the attention of the news media." And indeed, the modern national nominating convention does fit all four of Boorstin's criteria for a pseudo-event:

1. It is not spontaneous. Not only are the conventions meticulously planned, but during the television age almost all suspense on the selection of the nominee has been removed.

2. It is planted largely for the purpose of being reported or recorded. In modern political conventions, the journalists outnumber the delegates three to one (Guskind, 1988).

3. Its relation to the underlying reality of the situation is ambiguous. I shall discuss Shafer's analysis of the "bifurcated convention" -- those who attend the convention see

one version of reality, those who view it on television see quite another.

4. It is intended to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. When a political party has weathered a divisive primary season, convention planners try to project images of unity, hoping to use the convention to bring the party together.

The choreographed nature of the quadrennial gatherings, coupled with the low television ratings and high costs of coverage, have led CBS and NBC, beginning in 1980, to gradually move away from gavel-to-gavel coverage. ABC had been cutting back on coverage since 1968 (Shafer, 1988). Some network executives want to cut back even more, saying they don't want to be part of a media circus. But many journalists vigorously object to any plan to trim convention coverage, saying it gives the American public a valuable opportunity to get to know the candidates who aspire to the nation's highest office.

Boorstin (1972) wrote: "Our national politics has become a competition for images or between images, rather than between ideals" (p. 249). He offers no cure, other than to develop an understanding of these images and their effects, and distinguish more critically between the images and the reality.

In light of these arguments, ABC, CBS and NBC face a serious dilemma for 1992. Should they continue covering these pseudo-events in the same way as they have in the past few years -- two or three prime time hours over four nights -- or should they sharply reduce their coverage? Is there a way in which the networks could redirect resources to provide more critical, thoughtful coverage of elections? Should the advent of all-news networks such as CNN and C-SPAN affect the networks' decision? To answer these questions, we must first look more closely at how television's role in the conventions has evolved.

The Evolution of Televised Coverage

The first large-scale effort to televise conventions nationwide was in 1952. Network officials touted the coverage as a milestone in the coming-of-age of television news. In fact, the completion of the nationwide coaxial cable for television transmissions was expedited specifically to provide coverage of the conventions (Shafer, 1988).

Comprehensive ratings measures were not available in 1952, but it is estimated that the networks' audience averaged between 25 percent and 30 percent of all American households with television sets (Shafer, 1988). The numbers suggested that the networks' average audience during the convention telecasts was only two-thirds what it would have been had standard network fare, such as variety shows and situation comedies, been offered. But Shafer notes that "these analyses were brushed aside in the aftermath -- the afterglow, really -- of network coverage of the 1952 conventions. Television news officials were aggressive in saluting their triumph, recognizing in it the potential for displacing radio news as the central source of information about public affairs for the largest share of the American public" (pp. 263-264). The networks therefore decided to stay with gavel-to-gavel coverage.

An examination of the literature dealing with modern conventions shows that since 1952, three factors have combined to change television's role in reporting the event, and have contributed, in some cases, to television's becoming a part of the event itself. They are (a) the political parties' realization of the power of television to influence public perceptions of a candidate, issue or party, and to help set the public agenda; (b) the convention's transition from a nominating body to a ratifying body; and (c) the decisions of CBS, NBC and ABC in recent years to cut back on coverage.

The Parties Learn the Power

Perhaps at no time has the power of television to sway public perceptions during political conventions been demonstrated so plainly as on the evening of August 28, 1968.

The Democratic Party, plagued by division and strife, was preparing that night to nominate Hubert Humphrey for president. Millions watched on television as Carl Stokes, the mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, rose to ceremoniously place Humphrey's name in nomination.

Suddenly, NBC cut away from the speech to show freshly-edited film of violent clashes that had taken place earlier that evening between demonstrators and the Chicago police. The Democrats had hoped to project an image of harmony and hope. What the nation saw was blood and tear gas.

Humphrey, watching it all on television in his hotel suite, is said to have furiously blurted out, "I'm going to be president someday. I'm going to appoint the FCC -- we're going to look into all this!" He knew that the images of that night, beamed into millions of living rooms, would haunt his campaign, and indeed they may have helped doom it. The Chicago police, who were perceived to be senselessly brutalizing the demonstrators, were controlled by Mayor Richard Daley -- and to a large degree, so was the convention that nominated Humphrey. Even the demonstrators 25 floors below knew of television's power. Over and over again, amid the violence, they shouted: "The whole world is watching. The whole world is watching" (White, 1969, pp. 372-376).

Is it any wonder that the political parties seem to have become concerned, to an unprecedented degree, with the image they project during the convention? In this age of pollsters and media advisers, politics begins to sound chillingly like a business. Donald Fowler, the chief executive officer of the 1988 Democratic convention, put it bluntly: The parties are interested not in ratings, he said, but in "how many percentage points are added to our guy's margin" over his opponent ("Low Ratings," 1988).

The emphasis apparently works, temporarily at least: Candidates typically benefit from a short, rapid surge in the opinion polls shortly after their party's convention ("Low Ratings," 1988).

In 1980, writer Neil Hickey asked a television executive how much each of the political parties would have had to pay the networks if they were charged standard advertising rates for coverage of that year's conventions. The executive frowned and said, "about $10 million" (Davis, 1983, p. 204).

One excellent example of a choreographed convention was the 1972 GOP meeting in Miami Beach, when Richard Nixon was renominated. Just how tightly the convention was planned came to light when a messenger mistakenly delivered to the BBC some copies of the convention "script." It included precise times allotted to introductions of speakers, applause, and "spontaneous" demonstrations for Nixon (Davis, 1983).

The role of the primaries

Interestingly, the first conventions to be televised, those of 1952, were the last at which a nomination was actually decided at the gathering. It was the last time the Democrats took more than one ballot to nominate a candidate, and the last time a front-runner was stopped at the convention. The

Republicans haven't had a multi-ballot convention since 1948, and haven't stopped a front-runner since 1940 (Reiter, 1985).

The lack of suspense about the nominee grew indirectly from an attempt by the parties to further democratize the nominating process. The parties in the 1970s had begun to move toward selecting committed delegates in primaries and caucuses long before the convention. This stripped party regulars of much of their control over the nominating process and gave it to voters instead. That meant a greater role for the media. Unlike the party regulars, the voters could not know the candidates personally. They turned to television, radio, newspapers and campaign advertising (Marshall, 1981).

The media themselves have helped kill the suspense of the nominating convention by the way they cover the primaries. Marshall contends the media tend to simplify the results of these elections, giving disproportionate coverage to the winner, even though that candidate may have received only a small plurality. In 1976 Jimmy Carter finished first in the crowded New Hampshire primary, but his victory was narrow, with only 29 percent of the vote. But headlines, photographs and news stories emphasized that Carter had won. The narrowness of his victory wasn't as clear. In this way, Marshall (1981) argues, the media contribute to the early emergence of front-runners. The media often comment on the lack of suspense at political conventions, but by identifying front-runners early and indirectly contributing to their momentum, the media themselves have helped bring about this trend.

The media also complain about a lack of substance in convention proceedings and in campaign speeches. But many critics assert that the media contribute to this lack of substance through a preoccupation with horse-race coverage. Michael Jay Robinson (1981), who analyzed 1,500 campaign-related stories on the CBS Evening News during 1980, found, for example, that there were four times as many explicit references to success or failure as to all other candidate characteristics combined.

The decline of gavel-to-gavel coverage

In the early years, the desire to further establish the credibility of television news and perform a public service helped make the gavel-to-gavel standard a norm. The news divisions were thus able to overcome objections from members of the networks' programming and marketing divisions, who contended that the conventions' newsworthiness was overrated (Shafer, 1988). By the time of the 1964 conventions, there was still another factor that may have helped allay the economic concerns: All three networks had, the previous fall, expanded their evening newscasts from 15 minutes to a half hour. The convention provided an opportunity to showcase the news teams and indirectly promote the newscasts (Shafer, 1988).

It was after the 1964 conventions that one network, ABC, began to seriously consider a reduction in coverage. Since the beginning of national coverage, ABC had always placed third in the competition for viewers. So, for 1968, ABC sharply reduced its coverage, offering just over 25 percent of what had been offered in 1964. The results were striking. With regular entertainment programming as a lead-in, the ratings for the reduced version of ABC's coverage jumped dramatically (Shafer, 1988).

In 1972 and 1976, ABC enjoyed continued success with its reduced coverage, while CBS and NBC continued adhering to the gavel-to-gavel standard. But by 1980, several factors had combined to make CBS and NBC consider cutbacks as well. The most important reason was that the 1976 elections seemed to confirm the observation that the conventions had lost their roles as nominating bodies. In addition, the return of televised presidential debates, beginning in 1976, seemed to dilute the importance of the convention as a vehicle for launching the general election campaign. Also, by this time, the original marketing arguments for gavel-to-gavel coverage had vanished: The television industry was firmly established, and the evening news programs were thoroughly institutionalized (Shafer, 1988). So beginning in 1980, CBS and NBC joined ABC in offering reduced coverage, a practice that they have continued to the present. Coverage in 1988, for example, was generally limited to two prime time hours each night.

Another factor in the 1980s was the emergence of news-oriented cable networks like CNN and C-SPAN, which considered gavel-to-gavel coverage part of their mission. As Brian Lamb, chairman of C-SPAN, put it: "The viewers who care are angry at the networks for not covering the conventions gavel-to-gavel. So C-SPAN does it" ("Low Ratings," 1988).

In this era of specialization and audience targeting, will ABC, CBS and NBC end up cutting back and letting CNN and C-SPAN satisfy those viewers who desire a gavel-to-gavel approach? CBS Inc. Chairman Laurence Tisch has said no. Live convention coverage is "part of our obligation to the American people. If they want to see it, they should have the privilege," he said in 1988. When it was pointed out that CNN and C-SPAN offer full convention coverage, Tisch replied: "But we're free TV. We have to keep free television strong" ("NBC Scoops," 1988).

But executives at ABC and NBC seem more willing to cut back, noting a 12 percent decline in ratings compared with the 1984 convention coverage ("Low Ratings," 1988). The ratings show viewers are tuning to independent stations, most likely as an alternative to convention coverage. On the first night of the 1988 Democratic convention, independents pulled a 21.5 rating and a 39 share for the full three hours of prime time, compared with 20.0/33 for the networks. The comparable figures for the Republican convention are similar: 20.6/38 for the independents, 18.8/35 for the networks ("NBC Scoops," 1988).

Many potential convention viewers apparently just weren't interested. In Washington, D.C., video stores reported a dramatic increase in the number of tapes rented during convention nights, according to The Washington Post ("Conventional wisdom," 1988).

As Tom Hannon, CNN's executive producer for political coverage, (personal communication, February 1991), put it: "We're all driven by the same force: ratings. But for the entertainment networks, ratings are a disincentive to continue covering the conventions. For us, it's an incentive."

In addition to the low ratings, the networks point to a lack of news. An NBC News executive told Broadcasting in July 1988 that the scarcity of news was such that the network "would be better off taking an hour at the end of a session to highlight developments" rather than cover them live. "To the extent the parties continue to diminish the role of the convention in policy-making and candidate selection, we will move away from (live) coverage," he said.

Costs are another factor. But despite inflation, the networks spent substantially less on the 1988 conventions than they did four years earlier -- about $15 million each compared with as much as $25 million in 1984.

Problems With Television's Increased Role

Clearly, national political conventions have left the Era of Mencken and entered the Era of McLuhan (Kaus, 1988). Implicit in this are two trends that may be harmful to a democratic society that depends on the mass media for information on which to make informed decisions. These trends are (a) the media's increasing status as participants in the convention process, rather than observers, and (b) the difference in what actually happens at the conventions and what is reported. The media may be reporting the truth, but not the whole truth.

The media as participants

McLuhan said, "the medium is the message." Indeed, the arrival of a new medium at the national conventions of 1952 has drastically changed the message -- and even become part of it.

As Ranney (1983, p. 100) noted in analyzing the 1980 conventions:

> ...The television newspeople were more of a show than the people and events they reported. The anchors and commentators sat behind large desks in huge transparent booths high above the conventions' floors, looking down, like gods, on the antics of the politicians milling about below. When the famous reporters, such as Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, Barbara Walters, and Judy Woodruff, appeared on the floor to interview delegates they invariably attracted large crowds, and many delegates asked for their autographs.

Journalists and political leaders with years of experience at conventions have pointed out that in the television era, convention delegates are somehow more aware of what is happening on television than what is happening on the podium in front of them (Linsky, 1983).

The best example of the media becoming part of the event occurred at the 1980 Republican convention in Detroit. It looked for a while as though Ronald Reagan, the Republican presidential nominee, might take the unprecedented step of choosing a former chief executive -- Gerald Ford -- as his running mate. Ford and Reagan aides had been holding rather inconclusive talks all week on the possibility. The issue didn't really come to life, however, until Walter Cronkite interviewed Ford on CBS. Ford told Cronkite that a Reagan-Ford ticket was not out of the question. He even amazed some political observers by refusing to rule out the prospect of a "co-presidency." Hours of intense negotiations followed, but in the end the deal fell through and George Bush got the No. 2 spot. A great deal of debate emerged in the following weeks as to just how real the possibility of a Reagan-Ford ticket had been. The real answer may never be known, but clearly the story didn't take on a life of its own until the Cronkite interview (Shafer, 1988).

Another troubling aspect of the media as participants involves their symbiotic relationship with the political parties when it comes to the conventions: Both want good television. The Los Angeles Times described the scene in the NBC control room during Ronald Reagan's farewell speech to the 1988 Republican convention. NBC director George Paul said his job was to find camera shots in the crowd that "amplified" whatever was being said on the podium. So, when Reagan began talking about Social Security, Paul ordered his camera operators: "Give me some older people!" (Rosensteil, 1988)

Linsky (1983) described the symbiotic relationship succinctly:

> The politicians and the networks need each other, use each other, and are obsessed by each other's business. The politicians are media junkies and the network journalists are political junkies. They talk in codes that only fellow insiders -- other politicians and their staffs, consultants and other political reporters -- can fully decipher. (p. 6)

Is this symbiosis harmful to democracy? It is, if one accepts the notion that the news media ought to serve as a check on the power of government. The symbiotic relationship has been used in a broad context to explain the dominance of official voices in the news: Interactions between politicians and reporters hone politicians' news-making edge and keep journalists supplied with economical, well-produced material (Bennett, 1990).

CNN's Hannon (personal communication, February 1991) agrees that there is a kind of symbiosis, but contends that it does not harm the adversarial role:

> In fact, sometimes the role gets quite adversarial. There is a tendency on the parties' part to want to get involved in the logistics. They may come to us and say, 'If we put a particular speaker on the podium on Tuesday night, will you cover it live?' We just say, 'Look, that's for us to decide; you just do your job and we'll do ours.'

Conflicting portraits

Convention coverage is an excellent example of the notion that facts don't necessarily add up to the truth. The media present a series of accurate images in their convention coverage, but those images often gloss over larger truths.

Shafer (1988) argues convincingly that television, more and more, is presenting a picture of the convention that is quite different from the one the delegates experience. He contends television coverage has led to what he calls the bifurcated convention -- Americans see one version of reality on their television screens, but the delegates in the convention hall experience quite a different one. For instance, in the 1984 Democratic convention, television viewers saw a series of major speeches -- by Jesse Jackson, Mario Cuomo, and Walter Mondale. But television missed two major stories: a platform dispute between the Hart, Jackson and Mondale forces, and a vast increase over previous conventions in the number of African-American speakers.

And Rosensteil points out in the Los Angeles Times (1988) that a convention at which only a third of the delegates are women -- such as the 1988 Republican convention -- can look much more balanced on television if female delegates are shown frequently. As is often the case, two versions of reality emerge.

Conclusions

It is time for ABC, CBS and NBC to ask some serious questions about the merits of investing their resources in convention coverage. A decade ago, William Leonard of CBS News noted that the conventions were no longer as newsworthy as they once were, and he expressed the hope that the network would one day look toward taking the massive resources it put into convention coverage and applying them in a "more fruitful fashion" (Linsky, 1983, p. 120).

Leonard's comments are particularly appropriate today. As of this writing, it appears virtually certain that George Bush will again be the Republican nominee. That, in turn, seems to portend a Republican convention devoid of any sort of news or suspense. And if recent history is a guide, the Democratic convention, too, will feature little suspense, with the nominee having been decided during the primary season. The 1992 election season would therefore be an ideal time to experiment with a cutback in coverage and a reallocation of resources.

Here are some recommendations:

1. ABC, CBS and NBC should abandon most of their prime time coverage of conventions in favor of a late-night summary of convention developments in a format similar to that of ABC's "Nightline." They would, as with the Persian Gulf war, be prepared to interrupt regular programming with news bulletins as warranted. They could also, if they wished, offer updates at the beginning of every hour -- another technique that seemed to work well during the war. Political observers, journalists and others might object, echoing the sentiments of Dan Rather (1988), who argued in Newsweek that convention coverage should continue as before. "To see democracy on parade is important in a democratic society," he wrote. But I would counter that calling conventions "democracy on parade" is fallacious when one considers the stage-management and symbiosis described earlier.

2. The only major exception would be the final night of the convention, when the networks would devote a portion of prime time to live coverage of the acceptance speeches of the presidential and vice presidential nominees. As Lane Venardos, a CBS News executive who was involved in coverage of the 1988 Democratic convention, said at the time: "We have to try to

make sense of the political process, and try to give the voters some idea of who Dukakis is" ("Low Ratings," 1988). Though CNN and C-SPAN will no doubt offer live coverage as they have in the past, it can be argued that since cable penetration has not reached 100 percent, the over-the-air networks have a responsibility to make those speeches available to the general public. The networks obviously would also reserve the right to carry live broadcasts of other speeches that they deem newsworthy, perhaps the keynote speeches.

3. The networks should carefully examine the possibility of pooling resources. A little-noticed development in the November 1990 elections may help pave the way. ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN, in a cost-conscious move, formed a cooperative to perform exit-polling chores and project winners on election night. The system was not without its logistical problems (Berke, 1990), but it may indicate a new receptiveness on the part of the networks toward cooperative ventures. One form this could take is by handling the photographing of the convention proceedings on a pool basis, as is done with speeches from the Oval Office. The networks, when showing proceedings at the convention podium, would use the work of the camera pool, but each network could, whenever it chose, cut away for its own independent analysis of the proceedings.

4. Estimates of how much the networks would save by undertaking these measures are hard to come by. But it would

seem reasonable to assume that with these procedures in place, the networks would be in a position to redirect some resources toward more careful coverage of the primary season -- when the nominees are actually decided -- and more issue-oriented coverage throughout the campaign year, with segments such as ABC's "American Agenda." The latter, if done properly, could help defuse some of the perennial criticism of the media's "horse-race" campaign coverage. Bagdikian has suggested the networks devote perhaps four prime time hours to issue coverage during the fall campaign, but John D. Deardourff has said such coverage might reach more people if it is woven into the nightly news programs (both quoted in Linsky, 1983).

Boorstin (1972) wrote that "the least and the most we can hope for is that each of us may penetrate the unknown jungle of images in which we live our daily lives" (p. 261). By cutting back their live coverage of the pseudo-events known as the national political conventions, and redirecting their resources in the manner just described, ABC, CBS and NBC would go a long way to helping the American electorate reach Boorstin's ideal. And democracy would be better served.

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MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING AND PRIMING IN A DOUBLE-CRISIS PERIOD: A TIME SERIES ANALYSIS

(An Abstract)

by

Jian-Hua Zhu

Dept. of Communication Sciences
The University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT 06269

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Earlier agenda-setting research assumed that the media were only effective in telling people "what to think about" (raising issue salience). Recent research of priming found that the media agenda-setting effects could be extended to telling people "what to think" (priming political attitudes). The priming effects were largely shown in the lab settings, however. To verify the external validity of the priming hypothesis, this study uses survey data with national samples. Also included in the study are content analysis results of the New York Times and television newscasts. The federal budget crisis and the Persian Gulf crisis are used as the context for theory testing. Three alternative hypotheses (attention-distraction, reverse agenda-setting, and media direct effects) are also formulated and tested. The results support both the agenda-setting and priming hypotheses, and reject the alternative hypotheses.

MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING AND PRIMING IN A DOUBLE-CRISIS PERIOD: A TIME SERIES ANALYSIS

by

Jian-Hua Zhu

Dept. of Communication Sciences
The University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT 06269
Phone: (203)486-4080
Fax: (203)486-5422
Bitnet: JHZHU@UCONNVM

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MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING AND PRIMING IN A DOUBLE-CRISIS PERIOD:

A TIME SERIES ANALYSIS

Media agenda-setting is a widely recognized form of media effects. Based on more than a hundred published studies (see Rogers and Dearing, 1988), we have learned a great deal of this agenda-setting process. We know, for example, the media set the agenda for the public more often than the other way around (Funkhouser, 1973; Shaw and McCombs, 1977; Smith, 1987; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). We also know this process does not occur instantly, but takes some time, a lag probably ranging from a few days to a few months (Stone and McCombs, 1981; Eyal, et al., 1981; Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990). Though widely observable, the agenda-setting effects are not invariable, but contingent on such conditions as the characteristics of the issue (such as obtrusive versus unobtrusive issues, see Zucker, 1978; Blood, 1981; Yagade and Dozier, 1990), and the characteristics of the audience (such as the need for orientation McCombs and Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1980; Schoenbach and Weaver, 1985).

One of the most important questions unanswered in the agenda-setting research is, perhaps, the consequences of media agenda-setting. After all, what does the public awareness of certain issues, created by the media emphasis on the issues, lead to? In the classic studies of agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Shaw and McCombs, 1977), the media agenda-setting function was thought to be manifested only in the public's issue salience, not opinion direction. In their original hypothesis, McCombs and Shaw (1972, p. 177) clearly stated that "While the mass media may have little influence on the direction or intensity of attitudes, it is hypothesized the mass media set the agenda for each political campaign, influencing the salience of attitudes toward the political issues."

The majority of the later studies are confined to this salience-only perspective, by concentrating on testing the existence of the agenda-setting, or uncovering the contingent conditions, such as timing, issue or audience characteristics, and medium effects (newspaper versus television). In other words, regardless of whether the research focuses on the independent variable (the media agenda, or exposure to the media agenda), or on the intervening variables (issue, audience, medium, or timing), the dependent variable for most of the previous agenda-setting studies is invariably the public issue awareness. Only a few have tried to go a step further, investigating the consequences of agenda-setting, such as the changes in attitudes or behavior.[1]

There are probably many reasons for why the scholars take this cautious approach. After all, the agenda-setting hypothesis came out of an era marked with the down of the magic-bullet theory and rise of the limited effects theory (Klapper, 1960). The well-known inconsistency in the KAB (knowledge, attitudes and behavior) chain also discourages agenda-setting researchers to extend the media impact beyond cognition. Still, the unique methodology used in agenda-setting research plays a role. The bulk of agenda-setting research measures the public agenda (i.e., issue salience) at the aggregated level, and then compares it with the media agenda (McCombs, 1981). Such a design is congruent with its theoretical assumption that agenda-setting is a collective, rather than individual, media effects process. Meanwhile, it makes difficult to incorporate attitudinal or behavioral measures into the analysis.

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[1] In a study of the 1976 president election, Weaver et al. (1981) found some evidence that the media affected not only voters' image of candidates, but also their evaluations. Other two studies (Davidson and Parker, 1972; Mazur, 1981) reported positive or negative correlations between media coverage and public support for certain issues. However, as Becker and McLeod (1976) pointed out, public attitudes could result directly from media semantic content or indirectly from the media agenda. Without isolating the first possibility, those studies offer nothing conclusive to the question about the consequences of agenda-setting.

While it is certainly important to document the existence of agenda-setting and its various contingent conditions, this restricted salience-only approach hinders the political significance of agenda-setting process. Several authors have called for "going beyond the agenda-setting." Among various efforts, three studies deserve special attention here: (1) Weaver's study on the connection between issue salience, opinion intensity, and opinion direction; (2) Mutz's study of information sources, perceptions, and political consequences; and (3) Iyengar and Kinder's study of media priming effects.

RELATED STUDIES

In a recent review of agenda-setting research, Iyengar (1988, p. 600) suggested "researchers move beyond searching for agenda-setting and attempt to document the attitudinal or other consequences of changes in the public agenda." In response to that call, Weaver (1991) investigated the impact of the public's awareness of political issues, on public knowledge, opinion, and behavior in a 1988 election survey, and obtained some supporting evidence. In particular, the study found that the increased salience of the deficit issue was accompanied by increased knowledge of its possible causes and solutions, stronger opinions, less likelihood of taking a neutral position, and more likelihood of participating in politics through such behavior as signing petitions, voting, attending meetings, and writing letters." In conclusion, he believed these findings were in line with Katz's (1980) and Lang and Lang's (1981) arguments that the agenda-setting can not only influence people what to think about, but sometimes influence what they think.

Though never formulizing her thesis under the agenda-setting framework, Mutz (1989) provided encouraging evidence for looking into the political consequences of media agenda-setting process. She started with introducing an intervening variable, issue perceptions, into the relationship between information sources and political consequences. The intervening variable was further differentiated at two levels: personal-level perception (e.g., see unemployment as a personal problem), and societal-level perception (unemployment as a social problem). As her study demonstrates, the personal-level perception is contributed by direct experience, whereas the societal-level perception is influenced by the exposure to media. More interestingly, the evaluation of political leaders is affected by the societal-level perception, but not the personal-level perception. While countering the conventional wisdom that people make political judgment based on their self-interests (a pocketbook voter thesis), her results suggest a possible linkage between media agenda-setting (making people to perceive unemployment as the social problem) and political consequences (rating the government based on the societal-level perception).

The most direct evidence about the consequences of media agenda-setting comes from the research on priming by Iyengar and Kinder (1987). Priming is defined by the authors as the process whereby the media shape the standards that the public uses to make political judgments. The assumption underlying this process is that, when facing complex political phenomena, the ordinary people do not conduct a thorough analysis based on all knowledge stored. They simply pick up bits and pieces of fresh information from the top of their mind. The media, in particular television, provide a convenient solution to this short-cut strategy. By concentrating on certain issues, the media make the audience to accept the importance of those issues; and consequently, the audience will use those issues as the criteria to evaluate political leaders' performance. Iyengar and Kinder obtained evidence supporting this hypothesis from their laboratory manipulation. For example, the viewers who were exposed to television coverage of national defense judged the president by how well he was handling the defense issue; those receiving heavy dose of inflation news rated the president by his efforts to keep prices down. Based on the results, the authors called for a revision of the limited effects model.

Despite different conceptualizations and methodologies, the three studies have one thing in common -- treating agenda-setting as an intervening variable, rather than the ultimate dependent variable as the case of many other studies. Combined together, they clearly suggest that the impact of media emphasis on certain issues is not just limited to setting the issue agenda for the public, but possibly extendible to other areas such as priming political attitudes. Each of the studies, however, also has certain caveats. Both Weaver's study and Mutz's suffer from no control of causality. Relied on analysis of cross sectional survey data, the authors had to make a questionable a prior assumption that the issue salience (in Weaver's case) or the societal-level perception (in Mutz's) proceeds the attitudinal variables (opinion direction for the former and evaluation of government leaders for the latter). Although statistical control was used, alternative explanations were not completely ruled out. One possibility, as Iyengar and Kinder termed it as "projection," is that people's political attitudes toward the government may affect their perception of the issue's salience or social significance, which in turn leads to exposure to media coverage.

Iyengar and Kinder's lab manipulation provides a strong basis for causal inference from issue salience to political attitudes, but they face the question of the ecological validity of their findings, a problem commonly encountered by experimental study. One potential problem with the experimental approach to priming is, for example, that the artificially intensified exposure to media messages might bring about the effects that are not likely to occur in a real situation. Furthermore, while the lab manipulation involves a single issue, there are multiple issues competing for attention in the actual media environment. Then, the priming phenomenon found in experiment must be verified by field studies. Other researchers have confirmed the priming hypothesis (e.g., Schleuder, et al., 1989), but still in lab settings. The only test for the priming hypothesis with survey data reported so far is a secondary analysis of the 1986 National Election Study (Krosnick and Kinder, 1990). While their findings were consistent with the previous experimental results, the study was based on a comparison of two groups of people, one interviewed before the disclosure of the Iran-Contras scandal, and the other after. Thus, more studies with longer time span are needed to finalize the priming hypothesis.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the literature reviewed, two working hypotheses are formulated for the current study:

H_1. The intensive media coverage of an issue will lead to, and only lead to, the increase in the public concern of that issue, after controlling for real event cues and prior concern level (i.e., the net impact of media agenda-setting);

H_2. The public concern of the issue will in turn lead to the change (more positive or negative) in the public attitudes toward political leadership, after controlling for real event cues and prior attitudes (i.e., the net impact of media priming).

The working hypotheses specify, as in the previous studies, the ultimate dependent variable is the public's political attitudes. Media coverage is treated as the independent variable. And the perception of issue salience is used as an intervening variable, which is influenced by media coverage (agenda-setting effects) and in turn influences the political attitudes (priming effects).

The two hypotheses imply the rejection of several alternative hypotheses. To make the testing of our working hypotheses complete, we must eliminate these alternative hypotheses. In fact, one weakness of some of the previous studies is the failure to address explicitly the alternative explanations. Three alternative hypotheses are therefore formulated. The first one addresses the possibility that the changes in the public attention to an issue are not caused by the media coverage of the issue, but rather attracted by the media coverage of other issue(s). This could be called the attention-distraction hypothesis, a rival to the agenda-setting hypothesis:[2]

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[2] The attention-distraction hypothesis is not a totally new idea. When McCombs and Shaw (1972) initiated agenda-setting research, they used a multiple-issue design, in which the rank orders of the public awareness and the media coverage of several political issues were correlated. Though never spelt out, a zero-sum principle is implied in this approach, which assumes both the media and the public are assumed to have limited capacity of dealing with issues. The rise of one issue on the national agenda is always at the expense of other issue(s). The McCombs-Shaw design has been criticized, however, for the crude nature of rank order correlation. More sophisticated methods, such as time series analysis, have become the predominant practice. Most of the time series studies of agenda-setting use a single-issue design, in which only the relationship between the media coverage of one issue and the public responses to that issue is examined. Therefore, the original idea of attention-distraction caused by issue-competition is somehow lost. Behr Iyengar (1985) noted the problems with single-issue design. When introducing multiple issues into time series analysis, they found some competing issues could play a significant role in agenda-setting process.

Alt. H_1. The media emphasis of an issue will also lead to the change (increase or decline) in the public concern of other issues (attention-distraction effects).

Second alternative hypothesis deals with the controversial "reserve agenda-setting" process, in which the media do not set the agenda for the public, but reflect the public's agenda. A theoretical explanation for this hypothesis causal path is the classic "mirror" theory of the press (see, for example, Shoemaker and Reese, 1991, pp. 31-32). Several previous studies (MacKuen, 1981; Smith, 1987; Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990) found that the public's concerns of some issues could lead to the increase in the media coverage of the issues. Although we doubt this would be the case in a fast unfolding event, like the shutdown of federal government or the conflict in the Persian Gulf, we are required to reject it in a formal way in order to claim the causal direction of media agenda-setting effects:

Alt. H_2. The media coverage of an issue is merely a reflection of the public concern on that issue (i.e., the public sets the agenda for the media, or the reverse agenda-setting process).

Finally, we need to draw a line between the media priming effects and the media direct effects. The priming hypothesis contends that the media influences the public's political attitudes through the mediation of agenda-setting mechanism. On the other hand, the direct effects theory argues the media directly shape the public opinion. Although few media scholars today subscribe to this simplistic version of media effects, it is still necessary to put it as a competing hypothesis to the priming hypothesis so that the current study can contrast them:

Alt. H_3. The media coverage of the issues will directly affect the public's attitudes (favorable or unfavorable) toward the political leadership, (direct effects).

Figure 1 summarizes the working and alternative hypotheses. NEWSBUD and NEWSWAR in the figure represent the media coverage of two issues, the federal budget deficit, and the Persian Gulf conflict, respectively. Likewise, POLLBUD and POLLWAR refer to the public concern of the two issues, respectively. RATINGS standards for the public attitudes toward the national leadership (presidential approval). The solid arrows represent the working hypotheses, while the dash arrows refer to the alternative hypotheses. In particular, the solid arrows from NEWSBUD to POLLBUD and NEWSWAR to POLLWAR stand for H_1 (agenda-setting effects); the arrows from POLLBUD and POLLWAR to RATINGS represent H_2 (priming effects).[3]

Figure 1 about here

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[3] Although not shown in Figure 1, the prior level of media coverage, public concern, and attitudes will be included in the analysis. So are the indicators of real events. The omission of these controlling variables here is to make the figure simple and readable.

The dash paths from POLLBUD to NEWSBUD and POLLWAR to NEWSWAR describe the impact of public concern on the media coverage (Alt. H_2: reverse agenda-setting). The cross dash lines (NEWSBUD to POLLWAR, and NEWSWAR to POLLBUD) represent the attention-distraction effects (Alt. H_1). And finally, the dash paths from NEWSBUD and NEWSWAR to RATINGS reflect the media direct effects model (Alt. H_3).

MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS

While working within the framework of the previous studies reviewed before, this study tries to overcome some of the weaknesses in these studies. Specifically, this study differs from the previous studies in the following four ways. First, this study uses national survey data to measure the public's perception of issue salience and political evaluation, which should have more external validity or generality than Weaver's study and Mutz's (both using local surveys) and Iyengar and Kinder's (experiment).

Second, to warrant the causal inference, this study adopts a longitudinal design, in which both the survey data and media content data were collected over time. This approach aims at improving the weakness in the previous survey studies (Weaver's and Mutz's). The time frame for this study covers eight months (between mid July 1990 and mid March 1991). Compared with some other longitudinal studies of agenda-setting (e.g., MacKuen, 1981; Behr and Iyengar, 1985; Smith, 1987; Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990), our time span is relatively shorter. This disadvantage is offset, however, by a shorter time unit (weekly, as opposed to monthly, or even larger units used elsewhere) is used.

Third, departing from the single issue approach in the previous studies, this study examines a multi-issue environment, as specified by Alt. H_1. During the eight month period examined, there were two critical events competing for the media attention and the public attention: the federal budget crisis, which led to the shutdown of federal government operation in October 1990; and the Persian Gulf crisis, which eventually led the United States to engage in a large scale war against Iraq in January and February 1991. The sudden emergence of the two crises in the national media presents an interesting case to test the dynamics of competitive political process.

Finally, to examine the net effects of agenda-setting and priming (see H_1 and H_2), we included as controlling variables the indicators of the occurrence of the two crises (called "real event cues'), to eliminate a possible spurious relationship between media coverage, issue awareness, and political attitudes. Several previous studies of agenda-setting have incorporated real world indicators, such as air noise level (Watt and Van der Burg, 1978), drug abuses (Beniger, 1978), and consumer price index, unemployment rate, and energy supplies (MacKuen, 1981; Behr and Iyengar, 1985), and found that some of the real world cues were responsible for the correspondence between media coverage and public awareness of an issue. In our study, it is quite possible that all the media emphasis and the public attention to the budget crisis and the Gulf crisis, and the subsequent attitudes, just respond to the dramatic events. Therefore, omission of the real event cues in the analysis may lead to spurious agenda-setting and priming effects.

Corresponding to Figure 1 in which five variables are specified, five time series are collected for the period between July 1990 and March 1991: (1) the media coverage of the federal budget crisis (NEWSBUD) and (2) the media coverage of the Gulf conflict (NEWSWAR), (3) the public concerns of the budget crisis (POLLBUD), and (4) the public concerns of the Gulf crisis (POLLWAR), and (5) the public evaluation of president Bush's performance (RATINGS). While studies using panel-design data have found that the time lag in agenda-setting process takes a few months (Eyal, et al., 1981; Stone and McCombs, 1981; Weaver, et al. 1981), most of time series analyses report a much shorter time gap, usually one to three weeks (e.g., Mazza, 1990; Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990). Given the quick onset nature of the two crises in this study, A shorter time unit to be sensitive to the dramatic shifts in the media coverage and the public mood. Therefore, the time series data were measured on a weekly basis.

The media coverage of the federal budget crisis and the Gulf crisis was measured by counting the number of relevant stories appeared in the front page of the New York Times, and on the prime-time newscast of ABC, CBS, and NBC.[4] The NYT has been widely used as the representative of the American press in agenda-setting research. Several authors (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990) have recently argued for using television newscast, given the prominence of TV in the American public's life. To incorporate the merits of both approaches, this study include stories both in the NYT and on the three networks. The major part of the story counting was carried out by two trained students, one working on the NYT and another on the TV news. I also counted a considerable proportion of both. The correlation between the students' counting and mine is .97 (for the NYT stories) and .83 (for the TV stories).

During the eight-month period under examination, the NYT ran in its front page 76 stories on the federal budget issue (or 2.2 stories per week), and 538 stories on the Persian Gulf conflict (15.4 per week). The networks had slightly few stories on the budget issue (on the average, 56 stories per network in the whole period, or 1.7 per network per week), but more stories on the Gulf crisis (706 stories per network for the whole period, or 20.2 per network per week).[5] Despite the difference, the four U.S. leading media followed a similar pattern with two spikes of the coverage on the Gulf conflict (August-September 1990 and January-February 1991) and one peak on the budget crisis (October 1990). Therefore, two summary variables were created: NEWSBUD indexes the number of the budget stories covered by all the four media (Cronbach's alpha=.82), and NEWSWAR indexes the number of the Gulf stories covered by the four media (alpha=.87).

The public concerns of the two crises were taken from several national public opinion polls. These polling organizations, including Gallup, CBS News/New York Times, ABC News/Washington Post, NBC/Wall Street

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[4] Taken from the Television News Index and Abstracts, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt Television News Archive.

[5] ABC covered more stories of both the budget crisis and the Gulf crisis than the other two did. For the budget stories, ABC scored 1.9 per week, as compared to CBS's 1.6 and NBC's 1.3. For the Gulf stories, ABC had 22.4 per week, while CBS had 18.9 and NBC 19.2.

Journal, and Yankelovich, frequently asked a same question: "What is the most important problem facing this country today?" (the MIP question). The percentage of naming the federal budget deficit or the Gulf crisis as MIP is used as the indicator of the salience of these issues. The results reported by the different pollsters are fairly compatible. For example, the question wording is the same. The sample size is also similar, usually between 1,000 and 1,500. All interviews are conducted through telephone. One difference variation across the polls is some pollsters allow the respondents to give multiple responses while others force the respondents to select only one answer. This problem was solved by following a procedure proposed by Iyengar and Kinder (1987) that calculates the percentage of responses rather than the percentage of respondents.[6]

A more serious problem with the poll data is that they were conducted irregularly and less frequent than we desire. Overall, the MIP question was asked in 13 polls between July 20, 1990 and March 10, 1991 (see Appendix 1), much fewer than required. As in many previous studies, the linear interpolation was used to make up the missing points in the series. To increase the reliability of the interpolation, the time period was also extended about one month at each end. Consequently, the total number of the polls becomes 16. As perhaps the most practical solution to the missing data in time series analysis, the linear interpolation can capture the general trend between two non-missing points. However, it cannot detect the fluctuation between the non-missin points, which may be very dramatic in some points.[7]

Following Iyengar and Kinder's approach, the dependent variable for priming is the public attitudes toward political leadership (RATINGS), measured by the presidential ratings in national public opinion polls. When asked "Do you approve or disapprove the way George Bush is handling his job as President?" the respondents were offered three options: "Approve," "Disapprove," and "Don't Know." The percentage of those who answer "approve" is taken as the dependent variable in the study. Compared with the MIP series, major polling organizations probe the presidential ratings much more frequent, even more frequent than we need. During the eight-month period, there were more than 70 points of data, or about two surveys in a week.[8] Such a frequently measured series enables us to capture all the slight fluctuations of the public political attitudes. A few exceptional missing points were filled up by the same interpolation method described above.

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[6] As an illustration, 24% of the respondents named the budget deficit as the most important problem in a survey by NBC/WSJ between July 6 and 10, 1990. In the survey, multiple responses were permitted (the total responses amount to 228%). So the percentage is adjusted to 12%.

[7] For example, the first poll asking MIP question after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was conducted between August 16 and 19, which indicates 21% considering the Gulf crisis as the MIP. However, this poll was two weeks after the invasion. The linear interpolation describes a monotonic increase in the public concerns during the two weeks, while one may have reason to believe the actual process to be more fluctuating.

[8] The actual frequency is less than that, because there were two or three polls on the same day. For example, three polls were registered on August 9, 1990. In that case, the average of the polls is calculated, which enhances the reliability of the data. However, the presidential evaluation is monitored very closely during several critical weeks.

Figures 2 and 3 about here

Figures 2 and 3 describe the news, public concern, and approval of the president in the context of the budget crisis and the Gulf crisis, respectively. Because the series -- presidential rating, media coverage, and public concern -- are measured at different scales, the figures use the standardized data. They show an overall correspondence in the rise and the fall between these series. For example, when the media emphasis on the budget crisis (NEWSBUD) reached peak, so were the public concerns on the issue (POLLBUD, and the dissatisfaction with Bush (Figure 2). As described in Figure 3, all three series (NEWSWAR, POLLWAR, RATINGS) jumped to the record high right after the Iraqi invasion on August 2, 1990, and then declined visibly. As one can expect, they went to another peak after the Allied air raid on January 16, 1991. Though intuitive, the rough graphic examination should not be taken too serious, because it cannot isolate several compounding effects as indicated in our hypotheses. In fact, one can find evidence supporting for any of the competing hypotheses. Therefore, formal statistical test with all proposed controls is conducted.

Before the statistical testing, all time series data were de-trended to make the data stationary, and to eliminate the possibility that the correspondence between time series is simply caused by a natural increment/decline trend.[9] After the data transformation, five multiple regression analyses were conducted. Because the time series data may involve in auto-correlated errors, GLS (General Least Square) estimation, rather than OLS (Ordinary Least Square), was used. In the first two regressions, used to test H_1 and Alt. H_1, the public concerns (POLLBUD or POLLWAR) was regressed on the media coverage (NEWSBUD or NEWSWAR, respectively), while controlling for the prior concerns and the occurrence

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[9] The de-trending was accomplished by first regressing the data on the time, and then using the residual (i.e., the difference between the original value and the predicted value) as the new series entered the subsequent statistical estimations:

Dep.Var	R^2	Sig.	b_0	b_1
RATINGS	.144	.013	62.1045	.3008
POLLWAR	.426	.000	4.2962	.5842
NEWSWAR	.317	.000	4.1545	.5487
POLLBUD	.081	.068	10.9954	-.0939
NEWSBUD	.020	.369	2.3972	-.0284

It turns out that three of the five series (RATINGS, POLLWAR, and NEWSWAR) follow a positive linear trend (increasing over time), while the other two (POLLBUD and NEWSBUD) display a negative trend (declining over time). While the positive trends are statistically significant, the negative trends are not.

of real events.[10] The time lag between the media coverage and the public concerns was set to one week.[11] The specification of mathematical equations, and the results obtained are reported in Table 1.

The next two regressions are just the reverse of the first two (to test Alt. H_2: reverse agenda-setting): each of the media coverage variables (NEWSBUD or NEWSWAR) was regressed on the public concerns (POLLBUD or POLLWAR), with the prior media coverage and real event cues being controlled. The same one-week time lag was used. Table 2 reports the equations, and the results.

In the final step, the attitudes toward the president (RATINGS) were simultaneously regressed on media coverage (NEWSBUD and NEWSWAR) and public concerns (POLLBUD and POLLWAR), with prior RATINGS and real event cues being controlled. Because there is no evidence in the previous research indicating the time lag between the public issue concerns (POLLBUD and POLLWAR) and the presidential approval (RATINGS), we conducted a cross-lag correlation between POLLBUD/POLLWAR and RATINGS first, and found that the lag from the public awareness of the budget crisis to the presidential ratings was about two weeks, while there was no lag between the awareness of the Gulf situation and the presidential ratings. The lag in the regression of RATINGS was then based on the findings. For the specification of the equation and derived results, see in Table 3.

FINDINGS

Testing for H_1 and Alt. H_1

Table 1 reports the determinants of public concerns on the federal budget crisis and the Persian Gulf crisis, which provides us evidence to test H_1 and Alt. H_1.

Table 1 about here

Two variables stand out in the prediction of the level of public concerns on the budget issue: the prior concerns on the budget crisis (POLLBUD_1), and the media coverage of the budget crisis (NEWSBUD_1). While the autoregressor (POLLBUD_1) is often found significant in time series analysis, the significant coefficient of NEWSBUD_1 ($b=.36$, $s.e.=.17$, $p<.05$) unambitiously supports H_1 (agenda-setting effects) that news report of budget issue increases the public awareness of the issue. In a more precise term, our data suggest that 10 budget stories in the front page of the New York Times or on the network prime-time newscast during a week would cause 3.6% of the public who considered the budget issue as the most important problem facing the country.[12] While influenced by the media coverage, the public's concerns appeared not to respond directly to the shutdown of federal government operations in October 1990 (for SHUTDOWN, b=-.34, s.e.=1.62, not sig.). This can be interpreted as the public as a whole did not take Bush's shutdown decision seriously, because they probably understood it just a political game between the White House and Congress.

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[10] They are operationally measured by a series of dummy variables. For example, a dummy variable (SHUTDOWN) are used to represent the shutdown of federal government (1 for the week of October 7 and after, and 0 for any other weeks). Similarly, INVASION is a dummy representing the week of August 2 and the after, AIRWAR is for the week of January 16 and the after, and GROUNDWAR is for the week of February 23 and the after.

[11] The decision is based on the findings reported by previous studies (Mazza, 1990; Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990) that also used weekly time unit. A preliminary analysis of our data also supports the one-week lag specification.

H_1 is also verified in the prediction of the public concerns on the Gulf crisis. Like in the case of budget crisis, the impact of media Gulf crisis coverage (NEWSWAR$_1$) survived the statistical test (b=.38,. s.e.=.08, p<.001). Interestingly, the magnitude of the agenda-setting effects on the public concerns of the war is almost identical to that on the budget crisis: 10 news reports will bring about 3.8% more public worrying about the Gulf situation. Of the three critical events in the Gulf crisis, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in early August 1990 (INVASION, b=6.51, s.e.=2.07, p<.01) and the Allied ground war in late February 1991 (GROUNDWAR, b=-21.57, s.ej.=2.81, p<.001) significantly contributed to the public concerns, while the Allied air bombardment (AIRWAR, b=2.17, s.e.=2.12, not sig.) did not. One may wonder why the coefficient of GROUNDWAR (-21.57) is negative, because it would suggest that the start of the ground war led to 22% fewer of the public concerned of the Gulf situation. We should remember, however, that the time unit of this study is one week, and the ground war lasted only 100 hours (February 23 to 27). In other words, the ground war started and ended within the same week. Therefore, the negative sign of GROUNDWAR can be interpreted as indicating a quick relief that the American public felt in the second week.

We do not find from Table 1 any supportive evidence for Alt. H_1, which posits that the public concerns of an issue are not the result from the media coverage of that issue, but rather the indication of the media emphasis on the alternative issue. For example, while the U.S. news media extensively covered the Gulf crisis during the eight-month period, the coverage of the war did not take away the public's attention from the budget crisis (for NEWSWAR$_1$ in the equation of POLLBUD$_2$, b=.002, s.e.=.046, not sig.). To be sure, the public concerns on the budget crisis did go up and down during the period, but the fluctuation was caused by the budget coverage, not by the war coverage. Similarly, the budget coverage did not shift public attention from the Gulf situation (NEWSBUD$_1$ in the equation of POLLWAR$_2$, b=-.46, s.e.=.49, not sig.).

Our decision in accepting H_1 and rejecting Alt. H_1 is further encouraged by the overall performance of the two equations (one for the budget crisis and another the Gulf crisis) reported at the bottom of Table 1. Both equations have a large proportion of variance explained (95% for the public concerns on the Gulf war, or $POLLWAR_2$; and 77% for the concerns on the budget deficit, $POLLBUD_2$). On the other hand, neither has serious auto-correlation in the residuals, a problem often observed in time series analysis (Durbin-Watson statistics is 2.16 for the Gulf war, and 1.83 for the budget crisis).[13] These statistics point to the fact that most of the variance in the public perceptions of the issue salience is accounted for by our hypothesized predictors, and there exist minimal chances that the changes in the public awareness are influenced by other forces not specified in the model.

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[12] As Neuman (1990) found that when the proportion of the population aware of an issue exceeds a 7-20% threshold, the public concerns will take off in a rapid growth (in a logistic curve). Following that, one can expect a public outcry if the NYT and the networks run 20 or more stories about the budget issue in a week. Neuman also estimated that seven to nine news stories about a crisis in a month (or 1.75 to 2.25 per week) could bring about 1% increase in the public awareness. Our finding (2.77% stories per 1% public concern) is largely in line with his.

Testing for Alt. H_2

While Alt. H_1 is rejected by our data, Alt. H_2 partially survived in the test. Alt. H_2 suggests a reverse process of agenda-setting in which the changes in the public concerns on an issue lead to more (or less) media coverage of that issues. The results in Table 2 show that while the news reporting of the federal budget deficit was not affected by the public concerns of the budget crisis ($POLLBUD_1$, b=-.09, s.e.=.08, not sig.), the public concerns on the Persian Gulf crisis did have a significant effect on the subsequent media coverage ($POLLWAR_1$, b=.49, s.e.=.18, $p<.05$).

Table 2 about here

The partially-supported significant impact of public opinion on media coverage echoes previous studies (MacKuen, 1981; Smith, 1987; Brosius and Kepplinger, 1990). The finding does not dismiss the agenda-setting hypothesis, however, because our evidence supporting the agenda-setting hypothesis, as reported in Table 1, is even stronger. It at best suggests a reciprocal relationship between public opinion and media coverage in some issues.

A closer look at Figure 3 further reveals why the public concerns would lead to the media coverage in the case of the Gulf crisis. We can observe two high spikes in the eight-month period: the first occurred right after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, and the second appeared when the U.N. deadline on January 15 approached. The media and the public behaved quite differently in the two waves of crisis. In the first wave, it was the media that led public opinion (with about a weekly lag), rather than the other way around. However, the media coverage leveled off during the weeks between October 1990 and January 1991, because the main events in this time period were diplomatic maneuvers, something much less dramatic, and therefore lower "news value," than the military conflicts in August. In contrast, the public concerns stayed relatively high, and climbed up as more and more troops were sent to the desert shield. On the other hand, after Bush announced the cease-fire on February

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[13] Durbin-Watson statistics varies from 0 to 4, with 2 indicating zero auto-correlation in the residuals, while 0 indicating perfect positive auto-correlation, and 4 perfect negative auto-correlation. Our two D-W values (2.16, N=43, K=6; and 1.83, N=43, K=4) do not statistically differ from 2.00 at .001 level.

27, the public concerns had an over-night drop (from a record high of 36% to an almost floor level of 3%), whereas the media attention to the Gulf situation plunged at a much slower rate, because there were many left-over issues, including the home coming of U.S. sliders. Given the graphical examination, we tend to believe that, while statistically significant, the causal impact of public opinion on the media coverage of the Gulf war is more likely to be idiosyncrasy of this event than a generalized pattern.

An interesting finding, though not directly related to Alt. H_2, is that the media did not respond to any indictor of real events (i.e., non-significant coefficients for SHUTDOWN, INVASION, AIRWAR, and GROUNDWAR).[14] This sounds strange, because intuitively we tend to think the heavy coverage of the crises is the media's natural responses to the real events. The finding is, however, in line with what many media scholars have argued that the media never reflect social reality (see, for example, Shoemaker and Reese, 1991).

If the media were not influenced by the public, nor respond to the real events, then, who sets the agenda for the media? As one can expect, the foremost important determinant of the media coverage of an issue is the prior coverage level of the same issue ($NEWSBUD_2$'s b on $NEWSBUD_1$ =.90, s.e.=.12, $p<.001$; $NEWSWAR_2$'s b on $NEWSWAR_1$ =.36, s.e.=.15, $p<.05$). Other possible factors may include media organizational structure, journalistic norms and practices, and the "hegemony" ideology in the society at large (e.g., the patriotism during the war against Iraq). These are not included in our model, however. The relatively less variance explained by our model (62% for $NEWSBUD_1$, and 44% for $NEWSWAR_1$) indicates the omission of these predictors.

Testing for H_2 and Alt. H_3

Table 3 reports the testing of H_2 and Alt. H_3. Briefly, H_2 is supported by the data, whereas Alt. H_3 is not. That is, the public concerns of the two crises significantly contributed to the public evaluation of president Bush, as the priming hypothesis (H_2) suggested; on the other hand, the media coverage of the crises did not lead to the changes in the public approval of Bush, as the media direct media hypothesis (H_3) argues.

Table 3 about here

The support for the priming hypothesis (H_2) is unambiguously strong. The two coefficients of the public concerns are almost equally significant in the statistical test: -.34 (s.e.=.17, $p<.05$) for $POLLBUD_1$, and .28 (s.e.=.11, p.05) for $POLLWAR_1$. The signs of both of them are also in our expectation in that the concerns on the Gulf war has a positive impact while the concerns on the budget deficit has a negative effect on the public's ratings of Bush. Translated into the real scale, the findings suggest that a 10% increase in the public concerns over the Gulf situation, or a 10% decrease in the concerns over the budget issue, would add about 3% of the population to the Bush supporters.

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[14] One possible reason for the absence of impact of the real events may be due to our rough operationalization of the variables. While it's possible to use the number of troops sent to the Gulf as an indicator of the Gulf crisis, no weekly measure of the federal budget crisis is conceivable. Among other incomplete aspects, this study leaves the refinement of measuring real events to future research.

Conversely, the support for the media direct effects hypothesis (Alt. H_3) is very minimal. Both the coefficients of the budget stories (NEWSBUD_1's b=.12, s.e.=.27) and the war stories (NEWSWAR_1's b=.12, s.e.=.068) fail to reach the statistical significance. To make no mistake, our data do not defy the media effects on the public's evaluation of political leadership. What is not found in the data is the direct path from the media coverage to the public attitudes toward Bush. The media still contribute to the formation of public political judgment, mainly via the mediation of the issue salience. This is exactly what the media priming hypothesis tries to argue.

Looking at the measurement of the variables, one may challenge the validity of our findings. While both the public concerns and the approval ratings were taken from public opinion polls, the media coverage was derived from content analysis. It is quite possible to find a significant relationship between two variables measured at the same level, while fails to do so between variables measured at different levels. If so, then a quick conclusion simply based on statistical significance could fall into what has been criticized as "ecological fallacy" (Robinson, 1950). An investigation of such a possibility would require data at the individual level. Apparently, this goes beyond our study using the aggregated-level data. The defense of the validity of our study, then, largely comes from the congruence between this study and the previous ones (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Krosnick, and Kinder, 1990; Mutz, 1989; and Weaver, 1991), all of which were based on individual level observations.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the significant priming effects found here are the net effects after the influence of real event indicators is controlled. As Table 3 shows, three of the four real event indicators play important roles in cultivating the public judgment of the president. While the shutdown of federal government in October 1990 costed Bush a 13% approval rating (SHUTDOWN's b=-12.97, s.e.=1.55, $p<.001$), his decision to launch the air campaign in January helped him win back almost the same score (AIRWAR's b=11.73, s.e.=1.87, $p<.001$), and the land attack in February added another 13% approval rating to him (GROUNDWAR's b=13.23, s.e.=3.44, $p<.001$). With these variables included, the equation explains 92% of the total variance in the public approval of Bush, and keeps the auto-correlation in the residuals to a minimal level (D-W statistics=2.07).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Figure 4 integrates the findings reported so far. Comparing Figure 4 with Figure 1, we can clearly see that all of the hypothesized causal paths are supported by the data, whereas all of alternative arguments of causality, except for one (from POLLWAR to NEWSWAR), are not supported.

Figure 4 about here

Therefore, our general conclusion would be that this study confirms, as previous studies (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Mutz, 1989; and Weaver, 1991) have argued, the media agenda-setting process does have political consequences (priming the public's judgment of political leadership in this case). In particular, this study demonstrates that the priming mechanism operates through a two-stage process. First, the media arouse the public attention to the issues of political importance (the agenda-setting stage). Then, the public awareness of the issues is translated to the public evaluation of political leadership (the priming stage). During the eight-month period under examination, this two-stage process was well manifested first in the shutdown of federal government in October 1990, and then in the Gulf war between January and February 1991.

In addition to verification of the priming hypothesis, this study differentiates the priming effects from other versions of media effects. First, the priming effects differ from the media direct effects theory, because the media do not directly cultivate a favorable or unfavorable attitude, but rather indirectly (or one may say, "unintentionally") doing so via the route of the public awareness. Second, the agenda-setting and priming processes challenge the earlier thinking of limited or indirect impact of media, because the media have, though indirectly sometimes, an impact on people's opinion, independent of their predispositions, the key argument for the limited model (Klapper, 1960).

Before closing, a few cautions should be exercised. First, although the study is concluded, the processes under study are still unfolding themselves. The financial problem that the federal government has been facing now is also shared by many state government. There are sporadic reports of the issue in the news media. There is also evidence suggesting a revival of public concerns of the government budget problem. Likewise, the public attention to the Gulf situation tends to be on the rise again, as the media intensify the coverage of the Kurdish refugees and Saddam Hessein's secrete programs of developing nuclear weapons. In short, had we included the last minute data, we would have observed one or more up-and-down cycles in the series. Our linear modeling might be less adequate for the multi-cyclical processes.

This study demonstrates the importance of testing agenda-setting process in multi-issue environment, as opposed to single-issue orientation used by most of previous studies. However, only a two-issue situation is considered, mainly for practical convenience. One may ask what happens if three or more issues are included, given the pluralistic nature of the system. As a matter of fact, there was at least a visible third issue, i.e., economic recession, throughout the period. While inclusion of more issues into the structural equations inevitably makes the analysis become much more complicated, if not unsolvable, the results may as well enrich our understanding of the agenda-setting and priming processes. This probably can be an item on the future research agenda.

A final issue deals with the generalizibility of our findings, because the study used the crisis as the context for theory testing. Would our findings be less significant in a less dramatic context? It is conceivable that a less dramatic issue may make the changes in the media agenda and the public agenda at a slower rate, and the time lag may be longer. However, the responsiveness between time series can be adjusted, as our experience with time series analysis suggests, by using different time unit (longer internal in this case). Many media scholars (e.g., Nimmo and Combs, 1983) may even argue for using dramatic issues to test theories, because media drama is the "norm" of American politics in the mediated society. Both the budget crisis and the Gulf crisis are not natural catastrophes, but man-made conflicts. Many episodes throughout the period were even intentionally made for the media audience. Therefore, the findings of this study should hold in other man-made crises, which constitute much of the world around us.

(###)

FIGURE 1

Hypothesized Relationships between
News, Public Concerns, and Presidential Ratings

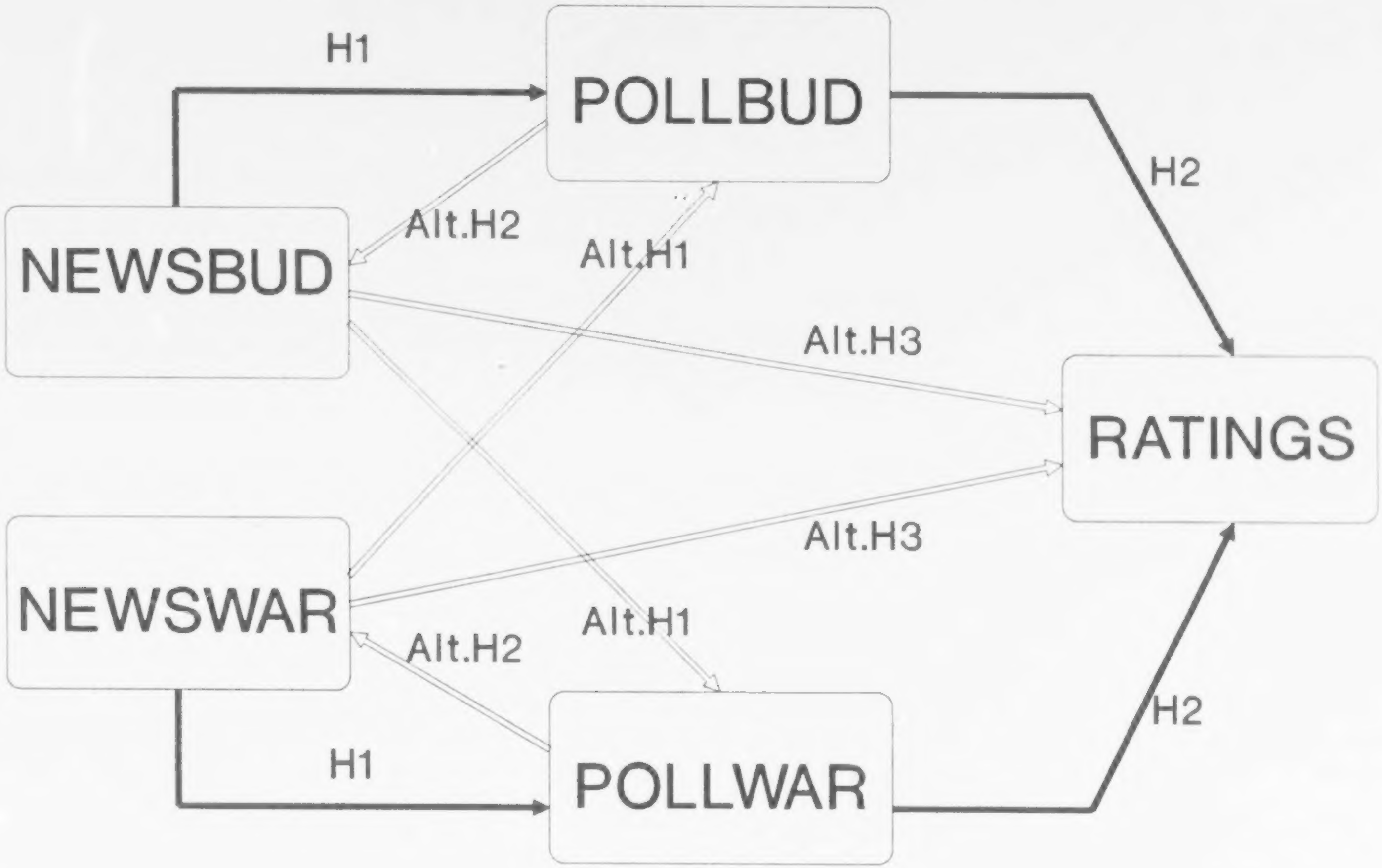
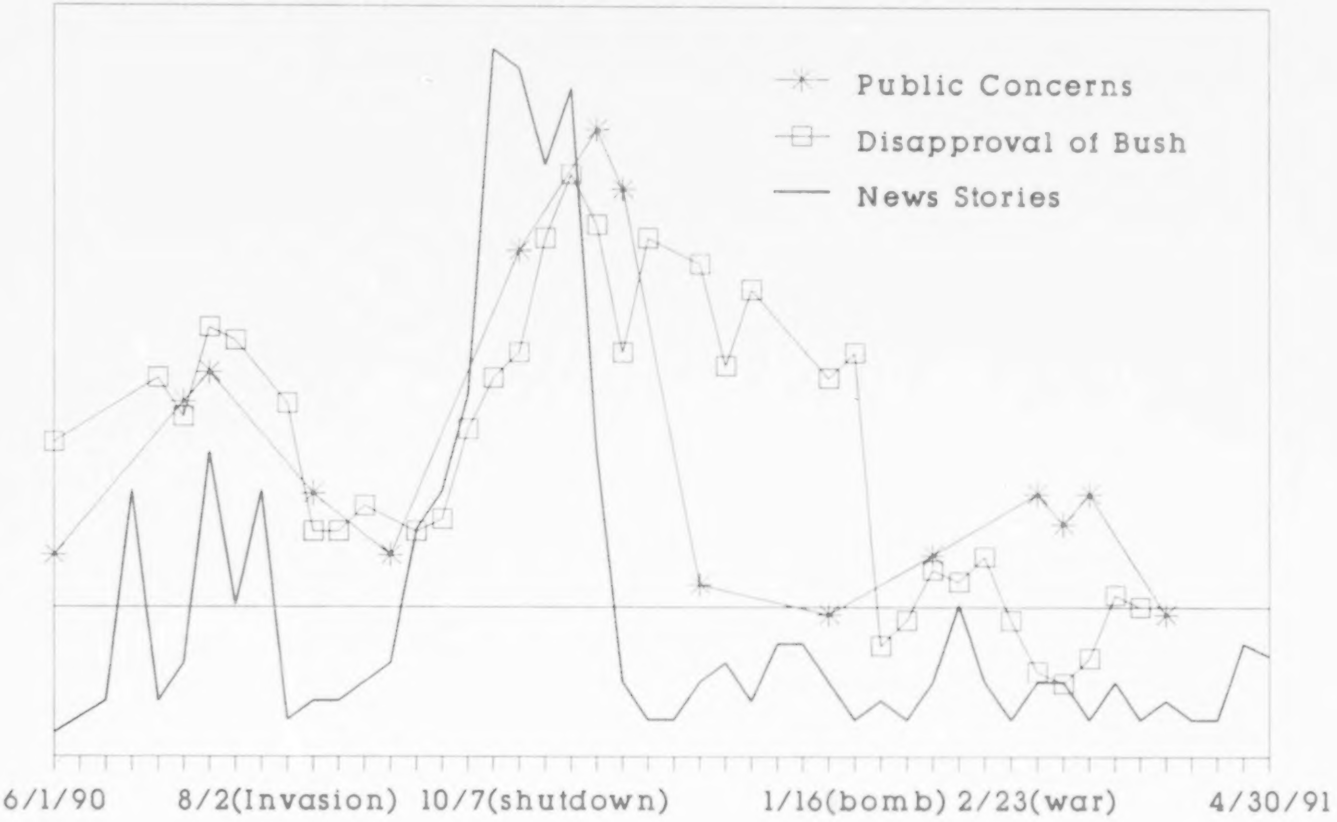

H1
POLLBUD
H2
Alt.H2
NEWSBUD
Alt.H1
Alt.H3
RATINGS
Alt.H3
NEWSWAR
Alt.H1
Alt.H2
H2
H1
POLLWAR

FIGURE 2

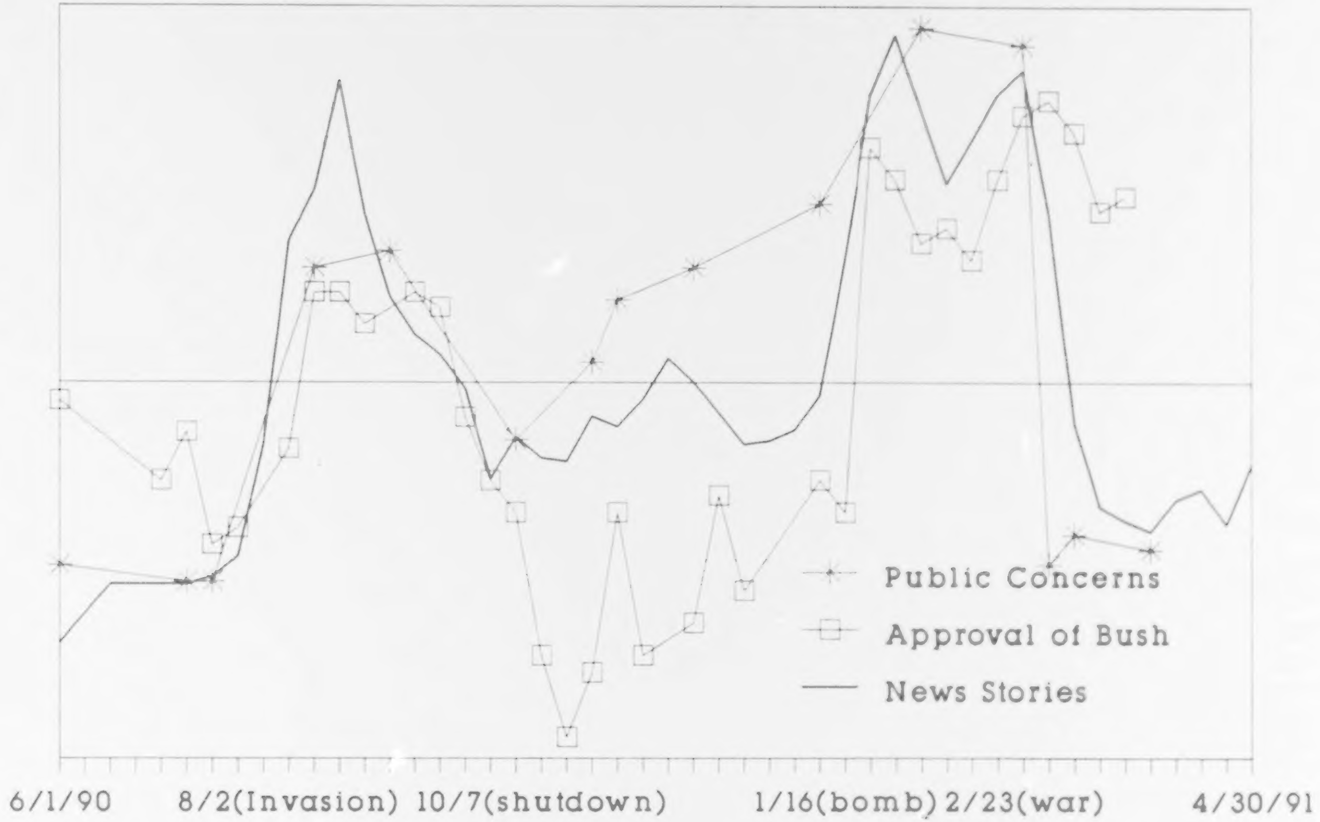
AGENDA-SETTING AND PRIMING IN THE FEDERAL BUDGET CRISIS



Note: Standardized scores

FIGURE 3

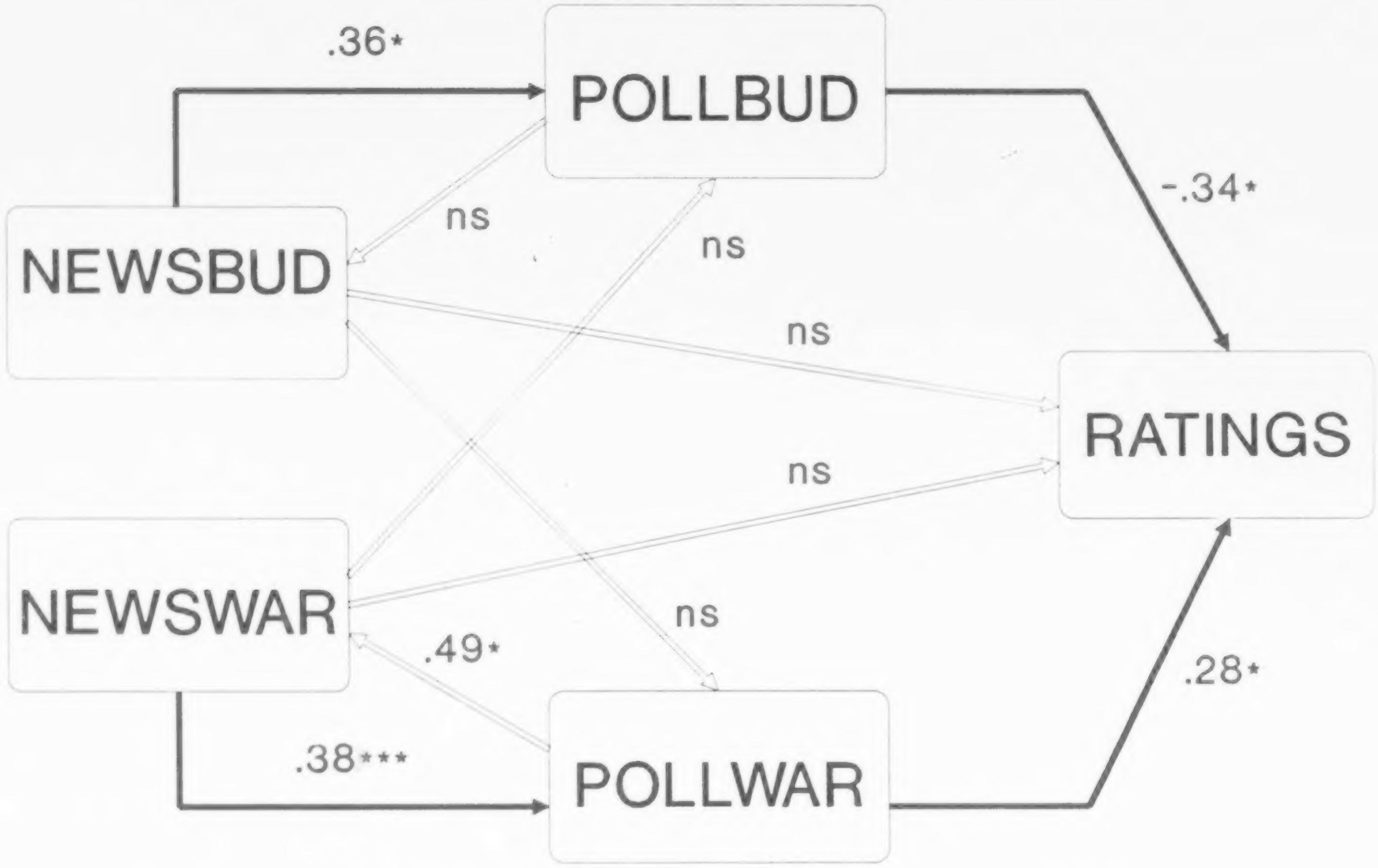
AGENDA-SETTING AND PRIMING IN THE PERSIAN GULF CRISIS



Note: Standardized scores

FIGURE 4

Empirical Relationships between
News, Public Concerns, and Presidential Ratings


.36*
POLLBUD
-.34*
ns
ns
NEWSBUD
ns
RATINGS
ns
NEWSWAR
ns
.49*
.28*
.38***
POLLWAR

Note: Unstandardized regression Coefficients

TABLE 1

Predictors of Public Concerns on the Two Crises

(H_1: Agenda-Setting; and Alt. H_1: Attention-Distraction)[a]

Predictors		Public Concerns $POLLBUD_2$		 $POLLWAR_2$
Prior Concerns				
$POLLBUD_1$		.890*** (.064)		n.a.
$POLLWAR_1$		n.a.		.014 (.150)
Media Coverage				
$NEWSBUD_1$	H_1	.361* (.166)	Alt.H_1	-.463 (.485)
$NEWSWAR_1$	Alt.H_1	.002 (.046)	H_1	.377*** (.077)
Real Events				
SHUTDOWN		-.342 (1.620)		n.a.
INVASION		n.a.		6.511** (2.070)
AIRWAR		n.a.		2.166 (2.121)
GROUNDWAR		n.a.		-21.570*** (2.814)
Constant		-.977 (2.032)		-4.032* (1.797)
Adjusted R^2		.766		.957
Std. Error of Eq.		.937		4.307
D-W statistic		1.826		2.164
N		43		43

[a] The specification of the estimated equations is:

$POLLBUD_2 = b_0 + b_1 \times POLLBUD_1 + b_2 \times NEWSBUD_1 + b_3 \times NEWSWAR_1 + b_4 \times SHUTDOWN$;

$POLLWAR_2 = b_0 + b_1 \times POLLWAR_1 + b_2 \times NEWSWAR_1 + b_3 \times NEWSBUD_1$
$+ b_{41} \times INVASION + b_{42} \times AIRWAR + b_{43} \times GROUNDWAR$

Special attention should be given to b_2's, the coefficients of our hypothesized effects (H_1: media agenda-setting), and to b_3's, the coefficients of the alternatively hypothesized (Alt. H_1: attention-distraction). Reported are unstandardized coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) obtained from Prais-Winsten's GLS estimation.

* $p < .05$;
** $p < .01$;
*** $p < .001$.

TABLE 2
Predictors of Media Coverage of the Two Crises
(Alt. H_2: Reverse Agenda-Setting)[a]

		Media Coverage		
Predictors		$NEWSBUD_2$		$NEWSWAR_2$
Prior Coverage				
$NEWSBUD_1$		.899***		n.a.
		(.121)		
$NEWSWAR_1$		n.a.		.361*
				(.154)
Public Concerns				
$POLLBUD_1$	Alt.H_2	-.093		.053
		(.075)		(.399)
$POLLWAR_1$		-.014	Alt.H_2	.489*
		(.023)		(.183)
Real Events				
SHUTDOWN		-.107		n.a.
		(.467)		
INVASION		n.a.		.223
				(4.014)
AIRWAR		n.a.		5.293
				(3.832)
GROUNDWAR		n.a.		-1.998
				(4.150)
Constant		-.102		-2.119
		(.366)		(4.033)
Adjusted R^2		.623		.436
Std Error of Eq.		1.600		4.353
D-W statistic		2.011		1.773
N		42		42

[a] The specification of the equations is:

$POLLBUD_2=b_0+b_1xPOLLBUD_1+b_2xNEWSBUD_1+b_3xNEWSWAR_1+b_4xSHUTDOWN$

$POLLWAR_2=b_0+b_1xPOLLWAR_1+b_2xNEWSWAR_1+b_3xNEWSBUD_1$
$+b_{41}xINVASION+b_{42}xAIRWAR+b_{43}xGROUNDWAR$

As in Table 1, special attention should be given to b_2's, the coefficients of our alternatively hypothesized effects (Alt. H_2: mirror theory). The unstandardized coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) from Prais-Winsten's GLS estimation are reported.

* $p < .05$;
** $p < .01$;
*** $p <.001$.

TABLE 3
Predictors of Public Approval of Bush
(H_2: Priming; and Alt. H_3: Direct Effects)[a]

Predictors		RATINGS$_2$	
		b	s.e.
Public Concerns			
POLLBUD$_2$	H_2	-.342*	(.167)
POLLWAR$_2$		.282*	(.105)
Media Coverage			
NEWSBUD$_1$	Alt.H_3	.115	(.271)
NEWSWAR$_1$		.120	(.068)
Prior Approval			
RATINGS$_1$		-.197	(.176)
Real Events			
SHUTDOWN		-12.971***	(1.547)
INVASION		-.497	(2.213)
AIRWAR		11.731***	(1.874)
GROUNDWAR		13.228***	(3.439)
Constant		2.628	(1.617)
Adjusted R^2		.920	
Std. Error of Eq.		3.403	
D-W Statistics		2.074	
N		38	

[a] The specification of the equation is:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathrm{RATINGS}_2 = b_0 &+ b_1\mathrm{xRATINGS}_1 + b_{21}\mathrm{xPOLLBUD}_1 + b_{22}\mathrm{xPOLLWAR}_2\\ &+ b_{31}\mathrm{xNEWSBUD}_1 + b_{32}\mathrm{xNEWSWAR}_1 + b_{41}\mathrm{xSHUTDOWN}\\ &+ b_{42}\mathrm{xINVASION} + b_{43}\mathrm{xAIRWAR} + b_{44}\mathrm{xGROUNDWAR}\end{aligned}$$

Special attention should be guided to b_{21} and b_{22}, the coefficients of our hypothesized effects (H_2: media priming); and to b_{31} and b_{32}, the coefficients of the alternatively hypothesized process (Alt. H_3: direct media effects). The unstandardized coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) from Prais-Winsten's GLS estimation are reported.

* $p < .05$;
** $p < .01$;
*** $p < .001$.

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APPENDIX 1

A List of Public Opinion Polls Used in the Study

Question: "What is the most important problem facing this country today?"

DATE	N	POLLBUD[a] (%)	POLLWAR[b] (%)	POLLSTER	POLL ID[c]
07/19-22/90	1,242	12	0	Gallup	USGALLUP298-1GPM
08/16-19/90	1,422	8	21	CBS/NYT	USCBSNYT082190
09/06-09/90	1,011	6	22	ABC/WP	USABCWP.90SEPT
10/11-14/90	1,009	16	10	Gallup	USGALLUP.90OCT2
10/28-31/90	1,445	20	15	CBS/NYT	USCBSNYT.110390
11/05-06/90	1,028	18	19	ABC	USABC.403
11/27-28/90	1,000	5	21	Yankelovich	USYANKCS.112890
01/03-06/90	1,006	4	25	Gallup	USGALLUP.122011
1/30-2/2/91	1,006	6	36	Gallup	USGALLUP.020891
03/01-03/91	1,005	8	13	ABC/WP	USABCWP.429
03/04-06/91	1,215	7	2	CBS/NYT	USCBSNYT.030791
03/07-07/91	1,000	8	2	Yankelovich	USYANKCS.031291
03/09-11/91	1,283	8	4	LA Times	USLAT.264

[a] the responses include federal budget deficit; failure to balance budget; deficit crisis.

[b] the responses include Persian Gulf; Iraq situation; Middle East situation; Persian Gulf situation; Kuwai; Iraq.

[c] refers to the identification code used in the POLL database at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Coverage of the 1988 Presidential Campaign in *Time*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Newsweek*

By

Mark Popovich, professor
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

Sandra Moriarty, professor
School of Journalism & Mass Communication
University of Colorado
Boulder, CO 80309

Beverley Pitts, professor
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

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Media performance in presidential campaigns over the past three decades, including the 1988 Bush-Dukakis contest, has generally been criticized by researchers. Concerning the 1988 campaign, one industry critic has said:

> American news organizations invested unprecedented amounts of money, staff time and newshole to coverage of the 1988 presidential campaign. Yet, a consensus has emerged in the wake of the campaign that the press failed in significant ways to achieve its collective goal of deeper, more perceptive and less cliche-driven coverage of the candidates and their positions on the key issues.[1]

Such comments are not uncommon since researchers have focused on political and presidential campaigns and there has been a disquieting consistency to the inadequate media treatment of political campaigns which has been uncovered by mass communication and political science investigators. Political scientist Doris Graber summarizes that research:

> . . . during the 1968, 1972, 1976, and 1980 presidential campaigns. . . .the media devoted the bulk of their stories to campaign hoopla and the horserace aspects of the contests. . . . They [newspeople] rarely attempted systematic coverage of all important issues. The issue positions of vice-presidential candidates remained virtually unexplored.[2]

In prior elections, other investigators have examined the amounts of coverage devoted to various candidates and parties, the kinds of topics the press covers during various campaigns, the incumbency factor, questions of objectivity and bias in various facets of the media, and the role the press plays during political campaigns in setting the agenda for its readers.

In studies concerned with the 1988 presidential campaign, Stempel and Windhauser found, that in terms of space, campaign coverage in 14 U.S. prestige newspapers was evenly divided. They concluded that there was little relationship between editorial endorsements and news coverage.[3] King analyzed campaign themes in weekday front-page stories from January to June in the *New York Times* and *USA Today*, and found that horserace issues clearly dominated front page coverage.[4] Hershey found that two-thirds of the coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Indianapolis Star* was devoted to campaign strategy.[5] A study of campaign visuals in the three newsmagazines found that Republican candidates were pictured more often than

Democrats. Bush photos were significantly larger than those for Dukakis, and a more positive presentation of Bush photos occurred during the formal campaign period--Labor Day to Election Day.[6]

To determine if election coverage was objective or if one party or candidate was receiving preferential treatment in the three newsmagazines, Westley, et. al., used assertion analysis to analyze party convention coverage during the 1960 campaign and found no significant difference in the amount of coverage received by the Democratic and Republican candidates, although the study did find that there was more positive coverage given to the Republicans.[7] Evarts and Stempel analyzed 1972 presidential campaign coverage of the television networks, newspapers, and newsmagazine during the traditional campaign period--Labor Day to Election Day. Using symbol analysis and directional content analysis, they tried to ascertain if bias was evident in the media coverage. Although they found a slight pro-Republican bias in the newsmagazines, they found that newspaper endorsements were not related to news coverage, and overall they could not find significant evidence of bias on the part of the newsmedia in the 1972 presidential election.[8]

In addition to preferential treatment, studies have also looked at coverage of campaigns by focusing on the horserace aspects, rather than the issues. Patterson analyzed media coverage of the 1976 presidential election, and found that the majority of coverage in his evening newscasts, three newspapers, and two newsmagazines (*Time* and *Newsweek*) was more concerned with horserace issues rather than the substantive issues of the campaign. He found that newsmagazines carried a high percentage of interpretive articles, while newspapers carried a high percentage of descriptive articles.[9] Dates and Gandy focused on newspaper and magazines to determine if their ideological constraints affected their coverage of candidate Jesse Jackson in the 1984 primaries. They found that magazines were more likely to deal with alleged candidate weaknesses, and they placed greater emphasis on negative evaluations than did newspapers. The authors found that when they tested the interaction between ideology, format and readership in coverage of the Jesse Jackson campaign, format was the single most important independent factor.[10]

In the area of visual impact, a study of 1984 campaign visuals in newsmagazines found that Reagan photos outnumbered Mondale photos, which was undoubtedly a reflection of the incumbency factor. Ferraro, the first woman candidate in a presidential election, received twice as many photos as Bush. The Republican coverage was more favorable in the beginning and reversed near the end as the Mondale/Ferraro candidacy took on a "come-from-behind" flavor.[11]

The original McCombs-Shaw pioneering agenda setting studies also considered the role of the press in establishing a public agenda. The found a strong relationship between "the emphasis placed on different campaign issues by the media ... and the judgments of the voters as to the salience and importance of various campaign topics."[12] The coverage by the media is, of course, influence by the emphasis placed on topics by the source. In other words, the source presents a set of issues and the press" re-presents" and modifies this agenda through its reporting and editing function. This relationship has been investigated by Wesley and more recently by Paraschos.[13] The media-source relationship also has been analyzed by Reese in terms of exercise in power relations that exists within the media and across organizational boundaries.[14] Another study has found that the media agenda-setting power is stronger when dealing with concrete issues and decreases as the issues become more abstract.[15]

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study will look at the performance of *Time, U.S. News & World Report,* and *Newsweek* in the 1988 presidential campaign. Over the years, few studies have analyzed newsmagazine political coverage, including the 1988 campaign. And since a previous newsmagazine visuals study has determined that Bush photos were more positively portrayed by all three newsmagazines from September to November, this study will attempt to assess if newsmagazine lead stories carried the same positive leanings toward Bush and the Republican ticket, as has been indicated in other newsmagazine studies. The study will also look at the coverage of the horserace aspects of the campaign and compare that with the coverage of issues. Specific research questions include:

1. What was the overall direction of the 1988 campaign coverage in *Time, U.S. News & World Report,* and *Newsweek.*?
2. Individually, and collectively, what was the direction of newsmagazine coverage concerning the candidates in the election?
3. What percentage of the attribution in the newsmagazines' coverage could be attributed to the candidates, the newsmagazines, or other sources?
4. What issues were covered and did the newsmagazines focus on the same issues in their coverage of the campaign?

5. How did the coverage of the issues compare with the coverage of the horserace aspects of the campaign?

METHOD

This study analyzed all 1988 presidential campaign lead stories for all three newsmagazines during the traditional campaign period--Labor Day to Election Day, which was a total of 33 stories. Overall, 2454 sentences were coded, of which *Time* magazine accounted for 811; *U.S. News & World Report,* 865; and *Newsweek,* 778. All comparisons between magazines were then converted into percentages.

The research methodology used was a directional content analysis.[16] A directional content analysis allows researchers the opportunity to examine whether the press is leaning toward one candidate or the other, and whether that orientation is positive, negative, or neutral, as in the case of this study. The value of directional analysis is that it adds another dimension beyond the sheer quantity of sentences or paragraphs devoted to one candidate or another, or one party or another. In short, while the column inches devoted to candidates may be equal in a particular magazine, the fact that a magazine may actually be leaning more toward one candidate than another in its coverage would go unnoticed. A coding sheet was designed for use with each story evaluated. Every sentence in the articles was coded in four ways: Source, subject, content and evaluation.

The source options were the four candidates (George Bush, Michael Dukakis, Dan Quayle, and Lloyd Bentsen) plus the magazine itself and an "other" category for comments by people other than the candidates. Candidates were credited as a source for every direct quote made by them or for any paraphrase of a candidate's words made by the magazine. The magazine was credited as a source when the sentence appeared to be a fact or evaluation by the magazine. The "other" sources were credited when the magazine presented a direct quote or a paraphrase attributed to a source other than one of the election candidates.

The subject categories identified who said what about whom, and in which direction. The options were:

-candidate says about issues
-candidate says about opponent
-candidate says about self
-candidate says about the campaign
-magazine says about candidate
-magazine says about issue
-magazine says about campaign
-magazine says about party

-other (fits into none of these categories)

For the evaluation each sentence was coded as either positive (+), negative (-), or neutral (0). A positive sign was used when the statement put the candidate, party, or campaign in a favorable light, or showed that the candidate agreed with the issue on which he was speaking. Sentences which portrayed subjects as strong, organized, focused, relaxed, etc. were considered favorable. A negative sign was used for statements that put the candidate, party, or campaign in an unfavorable light, or showed that the candidate disagreed with the issue about which he is speaking. Sentences which portrayed subjects as weak, disorganized, confused, unfocused, tense, etc., were considered unfavorable. A neutral sign was used for statements which were neither favorable nor unfavorable. Such statements were often statements of fact and/or provided background to the issue in question.

The content categories identified the most important issues. The campaign itself was included here as an issue as well as the following issue categories:

ABORTION issues: pro choice/pro-life positions, legal cases, public spending for abortion, adoption vs. abortion, etc.
CAMPAIGN issues: running mate selection, national conventions, campaign focus, organization, analysis, strategies, liberal vs. conservative, etc.
DOMESTIC issues: affordable homes, AIDS budget, drugs and alcohol abuse, law and order (crime), teen gangs, violence, catastrophic health insurance, Supreme Court, death penalty, other political issues, etc.
EDUCATION: college loan programs, student testing programs, school day length, role of teachers, government financial support for education, etc.
ENVIRONMENT: protects air/water resources, cleanup funds for environmental disasters, land recreation use, acid rain, etc.
FARM issues: farm credit and farm prices, limits on farm acreage, farm ownership, foreign farm markets, farmers trade bill, farm subsidy bills, etc.
FOREIGN POLICY: commitments to Israel and Arabs, Noriega and Ortega, talks with Gorby, Iran-contra scandal, Palestinian state, European political policies etc.
LABOR issues: increasing minimum wages, labor relations board membership, labor policy, plant closings, affirmative action, creation of new jobs, support for organized labor, strikes, union busting, etc.
ECONOMIC issues: both foreign and domestic, strength of U.S. dollar, trade deficits, budget deficits, capital gains taxes, 1992, European Community, etc.
NATIONAL DEFENSE: commitments to veteran's issues and strong military, bolster non-nuclear defenses, peace through strength intermediate range missiles, modernization of missile systems, destruction of ICBMs, repeal of War Powers Act, etc.
NUCLEAR DEFENSE: developing nuclear force as a deterrent, upgrading nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons freeze, SDI research and development, etc.
PATRIOTISM: pledge of allegiance in schools, flag burnings, etc.
WOMEN'S issues: day care, tax refunds for child care, equal pay, etc.
MISCELLANEOUS: any other topics.

In order to test the reliability of the coding process, an independent coder was asked to evaluate the coding sheets from all three newsmagazines by recoding at least 10 percent of the sentences in stories originally coded in each magazine. Overall, coder reliability was .93, which was determined by the use of Holsti's coefficient of reliability.[17]

FINDINGS

Although the newsmagazines as a group devoted more sentences in their lead campaign stories to the Democrats (546 to 520 for Republicans), the difference was not significant (X^2=.64, df=1, n.s.). Michael Dukakis received more sentences than George Bush, overall; while Dan Quayle received more sentences than Lloyd Bentsen (See Table 1).

TABLE 1: Number of Sentences Devoted to Each 1988 Presidential Campaign Candidate by Three Newsmagazines.

	Bush	Dukakis	Quayle	Bentson	TOTAL
TIME	112	147	10	9	278
US NEWS	145	177	66	13	401
NEWSWEEK	139	187	48	13	387
TOTALS	396	511	124	35	1066

The first research question was concerned with the overall direction of 1988 presidential campaign coverage in the three newsmagazines chosen for the study. Based on the percentages shown in Table 2, coverage among the newsmagazines would be considered neutral (X^2=10.98, df=4, p<.05). Both *Time* and *U.S. News* displayed percentages of neutral statements that exceeded 50 percent, while *Newsweek's* coverage in neutral statements averaged just under 50 percent. All three publications produced more negative sentences than positive sentences.

Although, overall campaign coverage by the three newsmagazines was neutral, individual differences among the magazines were apparent. In terms of candidates, the coverage carried by the newsmagazines was significantly different (X^2=10.97, df=4, p<.05). *U.S. News* coverage appeared to be more balanced toward the candidates, although the difference was not significant from coverage in the other two magazines. All three magazines carried more negative statements than neutral or positive statements about the candidates. Only about a fourth of the statements made by all three newsmagazines were positive toward the candidates.

Coverage of campaign issues among the newsmagazines showed a significant difference (X^2=31.25, df=4, $p<.001$). In this comparison, the dearth of both positive and negative coverage by *U.S. News* contributed most to the significant difference among the three magazines. Over 90 percent of issue coverage by *U.S. News* was judged neutral. *Time* and *Newsweek* issue coverage was similar in valence as two-thirds of their sentences were neutral and about 30 percent were negative.

TABLE 2: Percentages of Coverage in Three Newsmagazines Devoted to 1988 Presidential Candidates, Election Issues, the Campaigns, and the Parties.

Coverage	TIME			U.S. NEWS			NEWSWEEK			
	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	
Candidates	25	51	24	36	39	25	16	58	25	X^2=10.97, df=4, $p<.05$
Issues	67	29	4	93	3	3	69	31	0	X^2=31.25, df=4, $p<.001$
Campaign	67	31	2	85	14	2	58	41	1	X^2=18.75, df=4, $p<.001$
Party	57	29	14	62	32	5	45	38	17	X^2=10.54, df=4, $p<.05$
AVE.	54	35	11	69	22	9	47	42	11	X^2=10.98, df=4, $p<.05$

High neutral and low negative coverage on campaign issues in *U.S. News* again contributed to the significant relationship between the newsmagazines in this category (X^2=18.75, df=4, $p<.001$). Both *Time* and *Newsweek* carried more negative statements on the issues, while all three publications had very little positive to say about the campaign, in general.

Party coverage among the three magazines showed a significant difference (X^2=10.54, df=4, $p<.05$). Again, *U.S. News* carried more neutral and less positive statements than the other two magazines.

The second research question was concerned with both the individual and collective direction of candidate coverage provided by the three newsmagazines. Overall, as Table 3 shows, coverage of individual candidates was significantly negative (X^2=11.19, df=4, $p<.05$).

Coverage of George Bush in the three newsmagazines was significantly different (X^2=26.93, df=4, $p<.001$). Coverage in *Time* and *Newsweek* was over 50 percent negative, while *U.S. News* displayed a more balanced coverage toward the vice president. *U.S. News* was the only newsmagazine to provide more positive than negative statements for Bush.

When it came to Dukakis, however, *U.S. News* reversed itself and provided more negative than positive statements for the governor. Coverage among the three magazines was significantly different (X^2=11.57, df=4, p<.05), and *Time* and *Newsweek* published slightly more positive and negative statements about Dukakis than did *U.S. News*.

TABLE 3: Percentages of Coverage Devoted to 1988 Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates by Three Newsmagazines.

Coverage	TIME[1]			U.S. NEWS[2]			NEWSWEEK[3]			
	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	
George Bush	28	54	20	35	27	38	13	55	32	X^2=26.93, df=4, p<.05
Michael Dukakis	26	46	29	41	38	21	20	54	26	X^2=11.57, df=4, p<.05
Dan Quayle	0	100	0	23	67	11	8	88	4	X^2=31.27, df=4, p<.001
Lloyd Bentsen	22	33	44	39	39	23	39	54	8	X^2=37.58, df=4, p<.05
AVE.	19	58	23	35	43	23	20	63	18	X^2=11.19, df=4, p<.05

[1] Bush v. Dukakis (X^2=2.36, df=2, n.s.)
[2] Bush v. Dukakis (X^2=7.16, df=2, p<.05)
[3] Bush v. Dukakis (X^2=2.11, df=2, n.s.)

The greatest degree of disagreement among the newsmagazines in the coverage of the vice presidential nominees. While all three magazines presented a very negative picture of Dan Quayle, coverage of Quayle was significantly different as Time never represented him in positive or neutral coverage. The other two magazines did so occasionally (X^2=31.27, df=4, p<.001). Coverage of Lloyd Bentsen was even more disparate (X^2=37.58, df=4, p<.001), in that *Time* provided more positive statements than did the other two magazines. *U.S. News* coverage was more balanced toward Bentsen than Quayle, while the majority of *Newsweek* coverage was negative toward Bentsen. It should be noted, however, that out of more than 1000 sentences coded, only 124 involved Quayle and 35 concerned Bentsen, which is an indication of the importance the newsmagazines placed upon coverage of the vice presidential candidates.

Comparison of the magazines individually revealed that *Time* and *Newsweek* covered Bush and Dukakis similarly, and carried more negative than positive statements about both candidates. Time coverage of the two presidential candidates was not significant ($X^2=2.36$, df=2, n.s.), and neither was *Newsweek* coverage ($X^2=2.11$, df=2, n.s.). *U.S. News* coverage of the candidates was significant ($X^2=7.16$, df=2, $p<.05$), as the magazine carried more positive statements than negative about Bush, and the reverse for Dukakis. Even with that outcome, *U.S. News* coverage of the candidates appeared to be more balanced than the other two publications.

TABLE 4: Percentages of Statement Attribution (Raw Statement Count) Contributed by Candidates, Newsmagazines, and Other Sources in Three Newsmagazines.

Category	TIME	U.S. NEWS	NEWSWEEK	
Candidates	.06 (49)	.03 (28)	.07 (52)	(129)
Newsmagazines	.83 (674)	.83 (702)	.81 (619)	(1995)
Other Sources	.11 (88)	.14 (118)	.12 (95)	(301)
Raw Count Totals	(811)	(848)	(766)	(2425)

As has been the trend in media campaign studies, the overwhelming majority of statements made by newsmagazines in this study were contributed by the writers of the magazine articles (See Table 4). Less than 10 percent of the statements carried in these newsmagazines were attributable to the candidates, while just over 10 percent was contributed by other sources. This high percentage of sentences provided by magazine writers is not surprising considering Patterson's finding that magazines provided more interpretive than descriptive articles during election campaigns.

The final research question dealt with the coverage of topics in the 1988 presidential campaign (See Table 5). According to the content analysis conducted in this study, coverage provided for 13 topics in the three newsmagazines was very similar ($W=.91$, $X^2=32.76$, df=12, $p<.01$).[18]

The same five topics appeared in different order at the top of the coverage list for all three newsmagazines in this study (See Table 6). Coverage of campaign issues dominated newsmagazine campaign stories by as much as 55 percent in *Time*, 76 percent in *U.S. News*, and 77 percent in *Newsweek*.

TABLE 5: Percentage of Campaign Coverage Devoted to 13 Issues in Three Newsmagazines

TOPIC	TIME	U.S. NEWS	NEWSWEEK	AVE.
Campaign Issues	55.4	75.7	77.4	69.5
Economic	16.0	1.1	3.0	6.7
Domestic	6.2	3.9	5.4	5.2
Foreign Policy	2.2	7.5	1.2	3.6
Patriotism	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.1
Education	1.5	.1	.5	.7
National Defense	.9	.6	.6	.7
Women	.9	.4	0	.6
Abortion	1.0	.1	0	.4
Environment	.1	.2	.5	.3
Farm	.4	0	0	.1
Nuclear Defense	0	0	0	0
Labor	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	12.2	7.5	8.3	9.3

W=.91, X^2=32.76, df=12, p<.01

Such a performance by the newsmagazines in this study is consistent with previous media studies in that coverage of the "horserace" has been the hallmark of media performance in election campaigns for the past three decades. Whether the coverage has been interpretive, or descriptive as in newspaper coverage, mass media election coverage has not provided much systematic substantive issue coverage.

TABLE 6: Order of Importance in Coverage of Issues

TIME	U.S. NEWS	NEWSWEEK
Campaign Issues	Campaign Issues	Campaign Issues
Economics	Foreign Policy	Domestic Issues
Domestic Issues	Domestic Issues	Patriotism
Patriotism	Patriotism	Economics
Foreign Policy	Economics	Foreign Policy

DISCUSSION

Overall coverage of the 1988 presidential campaign--the candidates, the issues, the campaign strategies, and the parties--as it appeared in the lead stories carried by the three newsmagazines was judged to be neutral in this study, although differences in coverage did occur collectively and individually.

Coverage of the candidates, in general, by the three newsmagazines was negative, but coverage of political issues, the campaign strategies, and the parties was mainly neutral. Of the three newsmagazines, *U.S. News* appeared to present a more balanced overall coverage (0,-,+), than either *Time* or *Newsweek,* but a negative undertone to the election was evident in all three publications.

In terms of presidential candidate coverage, only *U.S. News* showed support for a candidate by giving more positive coverage to Bush than to Dukakis. Both *Time* and *Newsweek* gave the presidential candidates more negative coverage than positive. All three newsmagazines underplayed the vice presidential candidates, and were negative when they discussed them. Although Bentsen received less coverage than the other candidates, the newsmagazines were grudgingly more positive about him than about Quayle. The lack of vice presidential coverage in this study is consistent with the findings of Graber in previous election studies.

Newsmagazine statement attribution dominated presidential campaign coverage in comparison to statements by candidates and other sources. The significance of this finding was presented by Graber after studying the 1972 election campaign. She found that when reporters discussed the campaign without quoting the candidates, they did not include candidate policy statements in their campaign stories. Reporters, instead, relied upon horserace issues.[19]

Such was the case in this study, when topics covered by the newsmagazines were analyzed. The majority of statements presented by the writers were concerned with the horserace, rather than the substantive issues of the campaign. Notions abound on why reporters would turn to this strategy during the most important time of a presidential campaign, when voters are preparing to make decisions in the election booth. Hershey suggests an answer:

> This emphasis has obvious advantages for reporters. It permits them to be investigative without needing to know very much about complex political issues. It is much easier to grasp and convey the making of candidate images than it is understand and explain the federal budget or national defense. It lets reporters maintain the necessary appearance of impartiality and balance in a way that an in-depth look at the candidates' proposals may not.[20]

In some respects, newsmagazine writers in this study, while showing some occasional attempts towards impartiality in their coverage of the 1988 presidential campaign, could not hide their negative orientation toward the candidates, the issues, the campaign and the parties. The negative tone of the coverage raises serious agenda setting questions. Can the public approach its role positively and participate actively in the electoral process in the face of such negative coverage?

This negative valence is exacerbated by the tremendous emphasis on the the coverage of the campaign itself, rather than campaign issues. Approximately 70 percent of all coverage in the three newsmagazines focused on the campaign and, presumably, in a negative fashion and at the expense of other more serious issues. Determining the seriousness of the issues is another aspect of agenda setting. While this reflects, to some degree, the focus of the candidates, the decision on what issues to cover and how to play them is equally a responsibility of the editor. Looking at that aspect of the 1988 election, it is clear that there were only three issues that got minimal attention at all in the pages of the newsmagazines and they were: economics, domestic issues, and foreign policy. Patriotism was also in this group, but it hardly qualifies as a serious issue. At the bottom were labor and nuclear defense, two topics which were not discussed at all in the newsmagazine coverage. Barely making a notch on the recording system were farm, environment, and abortion issues. Some minimal coverage, however, was accorded to women's issues, national defense, and education but probably not enough to register these topics as important items on the national political agenda. It is probably justifiable to conclude that the newsmagazines in their coverage of the 1988 election functioned well as critics of the process but did not make a positive contribution to political discussion and debate in the U.S.

NOTES

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[14] Stephen D. Reese, "Setting the Media's Agenda: A Power Balance Perspective," 1990 AEJMC annual convention, Minneapolis.

[15] Aileen Yagade and David M. Dozier, "The Media Agenda-Setting Effect of Concrete versus Abstract Issues," *Journalism Quarterly,* 67:3-10 (1990).

[16] Richard W. Budd, Robert W. Thorp, and Lewis Donohew, *Content Analysis of Communications* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967); see also, Evarts and Stempel (1974).

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[18] Kendall Coefficient of Concordance was used to test the topic rankings of three newsmagazines. See Sidney Siegel, *Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956) pp. 229-239.

[19] Graber, p. 203.

[20] Hershey, p. 98.

COVERAGE OF THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN BY THREE GLOBAL ELITE NEWSPAPERS

by

Mark Popovich, professor
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
Muncie IN 47306

Sandra Moriarty, professor
School of Journalism and Mass
Communication
University of Colorado
Boulder CO 80309

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COVERAGE OF THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN BY THREE GLOBAL ELITE NEWSPAPERS

Presidential campaigns provide researchers with an opportunity to evaluate media performance on a number of factors. Journalistic studies have been accumulating since 1960 as investigators have analyzed election coverage in all facets of media, including the "prestige press" in the U.S. Few studies, however, have attempted to assess U.S. presidential campaign coverage in those newspapers considered to be prestige newspapers on the international media scene.

The events surrounding a U.S. presidential campaign are of great interest to our foreign press colleagues as an English educator points out:

> . . . foreigners, whether in Shanghai or in Oxford, know that an American president is not just an American President but a world leader, one of a very small group of leaders who is bound to influence their own fortunes and destinies. They have a stake in the result.[1]

Even our own colleagues have recommended investigating this transatlantic dimension in a recent special section of *Mass Comm Review*. In calling for comparative research efforts of political events, Blumler and McLeod observed, "We develop an understanding of our own media and political systems from contrasts to other systems."[2]

With these thoughts in mind, this study will make a comparative analysis of press treatment, direction, and coverage of issues in the 1988 presidential campaign as they were published by three international "newspapers of record:" The *New York Times* , the *Times* of London, and *Le Monde* of Paris.[3] Media scholar John Merrill recently defined what makes "elite" newspapers so prestigious:

> They are directed at a fairly homogeneous audience globally and have a greater interest in international relations and the arts and humanities than the general run of mass-appeal papers. They are well-informed, articulate papers that thoughtful people the world over take seriously.[4]

Most U.S. campaign studies have focused on questions of objectivity and bias, the incumbency factor, and whether coverage focused on campaign issues or the horserace aspects of the campaign. McCombs and Shaw analyzed the 1960 and 1964 races and found more coverage was devoted to the horserace than to campaign issues.[5] In a study of television coverage in the 1972 campaign, Hofstetter also found more interest in the campaign drama.[6] Russonello and Wolf studied the 1968 and 1976 campaigns and found that there was more substantive coverage of issues in 1976 than in 1968. They found some evidence to suggest that the amount of independent coverage--"coverage of the campaign not directly attributable to the activities and statements of the candidates"--increased between 1968 and 1976.[7] Meadow studied the 1972 campaign comparing newspaper and television coverage and found more issue coverage in newspapers than on television.[8]

To determine if the coverage was objective or if one party or candidate was receiving preferential treatment, Westley, et.al., used assertion analysis to analyze the 1960 campaign and found no significant difference in the amount of coverage received by the Democratic and Republican candidates, although the study did find that there was more positive coverage given to the Republicans.[9] A study of the third party candidate in the 1968 campaign by Stempel found that Wallace received less than half the amount of coverage and the other two mainstream party candidates received equal coverage.[10] In 1972, Everts and Stempel looked at television, magazines and the editorial endorsements of newspapers compared with news coverage, and found no bias in coverage despite the endorsements.[11] Stovall investigated the 1984 and 1980 campaigns and found that the Republicans generally received more and better coverage.[12] Graber investigated the 1968 and 1972 campaigns and found that campaign issues were defined by candidates, not by the press, and that the news coverage of the candidates was surprisingly equal. In her study of the 1972 campaign, she found newspapers replacing social issue coverage with more coverage of the horserace aspects of the campaign.[13]

In studies concerned with the 1988 presidential campaign, Stempel and Windhauser found that in terms of space, campaign coverage in 14 U.S. prestige newspapers was evenly divided. They said that "coverage did not seem related to editorial endorsement."[14] King analyzed campaign themes in weekday front-page stories from January to June in the *N.Y. Times* and *USA Today*, and she found that horserace issues clearly dominated front-page coverage.[15] Hershey found that two-thirds of the coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Indianapolis Star* was devoted to campaign strategy.[16] Zaharopoulos, who looked at 1988 campaign coverage in two Greek newspapers, decided that both newspapers supported Dukakis because of his cultural heritage. Although most of the news carried in his two Greek newspapers dealt with campaign issues; more photos, headlines, news, and news analysis focused on Dukakis, rather than Bush.[17]

A study of 1984 campaign visuals found that Reagan photos outnumbered Mondale photos, which was undoubtedly a reflection of the incumbency factor. Ferraro, the first woman candidate in a presidential election, received twice as many photos as Bush. The Republican coverage was more favorable in the beginning and reversed near the end as the Mondale/Ferraro candidacy took on a "come-from-behind" flavor.[18] A similar study of campaign visuals in 1988 found that the Republican candidates were pictured more often that Democrats. The Bush photos were also significantly larger than those for Dukakis, which may also reflect Bush's position which was close to that of an incumbent--already a member of the presidential team.[19]

These studies focused on different media--newspapers, television and newsmagazines. Most used content analysis research techniques but the Westley et. al. study used assertion analysis and Stovall employed a modified version of assertion analysis.

METHODOLOGY

This study continues to look at press treatment of the 1988 presidential campaign, but from an international perspective. It will focus on the coverage of the 1988 U.S. by the elite press in three countries. The newspapers are *The New York Times,* the *London Times,* and the Paris *Le Monde* . The analysis will be completed using a directional content analysis.

Whereas many other studies have determined quantity and subject matter of press coverage, this study will add another dimension--direction. A directional content analysis allows researchers the opportunity to examine whether the press is leaning toward one candidate or the other, and whether that orientation is positive, negative, or neutral, as in the case of this study.[20] The value of directional analysis is that it adds another dimension beyond the sheer quantity of sentences or paragraphs devoted to one candidate or another, or one party or the other. In short, while the column inches devoted to candidates may be equal in a particular newspaper, the fact that a newspaper may actually be leaning more toward one candidate than another in its coverage would go unnoticed.

What adds interest to the direction notion is that a newspaper may editorialize on behalf of a candidate at the same time the news coverage may be moving in the opposite direction. In order to analyze that relationship, it is important to note that the liberal *New York Times* editorially endorsed Michael Dukakis, while the more conservative *London Times* was sympathetic to George Bush and the Republicans in its editorializing. The left-wing *Le Monde* earlier in the election washed it hands of the whole affair in an editorial:

> The 1988 election will resemble its predecessors. When the political process is dominated by money and spurious moral values, it always boils down to a matter of expediency--and rarely produces anything other than mediocrity.[21]

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researchers for this study were interested in determining if there might be observable direction to the coverage of the election by these papers and whether it differed with the paper and its editorial position. In addition, there was interest in determining whether U.S. media preoccupation with horserace issues had carried over to campaign coverage by the elite press overseas, or whether members of the European elite press were more concerned about such issues as U.S. fiscal and trade policies and how they would affect the EEC, the status of NATO, and U.S. foreign policy, to name a few. Would the internationally elite press be able to cut through the "spin" of U.S. campaign strategies and inform their readers about the issues behind the campaign and would their view of the issues differ from that of the U.S. paper?

Another unique aspect of this study is that it analyzes the source, or attribution, of the coverage--whether a candidate or the publication--to determine the role of the newspaper in agenda setting. The agenda-setting research tradition suggests that the media establish an agenda of importance in the pattern of the topics selected for coverage in major events such as national elections. In other words, editors through their selection and the way they play issues, can raise the awareness level of readers on those topics and affect how readers evaluate issues. Candidates also have an impact on the agenda items in terms of what they chose to discuss or not discuss. This study will compare the source of the statements to determine if the statement derives from the newspaper or the candidate to see if the agenda follows a "partisan logic" or a "media logic." This question of source and agenda is particularly well suited to a comparative study of newspapers from different countries. This study will compare the source of the statements to determine if any pattern is discernible in three elite newspapers.

In summary, the research questions are:

1. Is there any difference in the way elite newspapers covered the candidates, the campaign, the issues, and the parties.
2. Is there any difference in the direction taken by elite newspapers concerning the candidates, considering the editorial endorsements of the newspapers.
3. Is there any difference in the attribution presented by elite newspapers in their campaign coverage.
4. Is there any difference in the way elite newspapers covered campaign issues in the 1988 presidential election.

METHOD

Study coders analyzed 132 randomly selected U.S. election stories, the majority of which were bylined, from three elite newspapers which were chosen from the front page or appeared as the primary story in every weekday and Saturday issue throughout the campaign--between the Labor Day kickoff and the follow-up analysis after the general election (September 5 to November 8). Since the length and number of campaign stories in each elite newspaper were unequal, the coders randomly selected enough stories from each paper to give the investigators 95% confidence that those stories selected would be representative of lead or primary stories. Each of the weekdays and Saturdays in the test period were numbered and then a random selection of days was made by use of a random numbers table. From the New York newspaper, 48 of 53 front page stories were randomly selected. From the London newspaper, 48 of 52 primary stories were chosen, and 36 of 43 papers were selected from primary stories in the Paris newspaper. Coders analyzed 2841 sentences in the *New York Times* , 1385 sentences in the *London Times* , and 1151 sentences in *Le Monde*. All comparisons between newspapers were then converted into percentages.

The research methodology used was a directional content analysis.[22] A coding sheet was designed for use with each story evaluated. Every sentence in the article was coded in four ways: source, subject, content and evaluation.

The source options were the four candidates (George Bush, Michael Dukakis, Dan Quayle, and Lloyd Bentsen) plus the newspaper itself and an "other" category for comments by people other than the candidates. Candidates were credited as a source for every direct quote made by them or for any paraphrase of a candidate's words made by the newspaper. The newspaper was credited as a source when the sentence appeared to be a fact or evaluation by the newspaper. The "other" sources were credited when the newspaper presented a direct quote or a paraphrase attributed to a source other than one of the candidates.

The subject categories identified who said what about whom, and in which direction. The options were:

-candidate says about issues
-candidate says about opponent
-candidate says about self
-candidate says about the campaign
-newspaper says about candidate
-newspaper says about issue
-newspaper says about campaign
-newspaper says about party
-other (fits into none of these categories)

For the evaluation, each sentence was coded as either positive, negative, or neutral. A positive sign was used when the statement put the candidate, party, or campaign in a favorable light, or showed that the candidate agreed with the issue on which he was speaking. Sentences which portrayed subjects as strong, organized, focused, relaxed, etc. were considered favorable. A negative sign was used for statements that put the candidate, party, or campaign in an unfavorable light, or showed that the candidate disagreed with the issue about which he is speaking. Sentences which portrayed subjects as weak, disorganized, confused, unfocused, tense, etc., were considered unfavorable. A neutral sign was used for statements which were neither favorable or unfavorable. Such statements were often statements of fact and/or provided background to the issue in question.

The content categories identified the most important issues. The campaign itself was included here as an issue as well as the following issue categories:

ABORTION issues: pro choice/pro-life positions, legal cases, public spending for abortion, adoption vs. abortion, etc.
CAMPAIGN issues: running mate selection, national conventions, campaign focus, organization, analysis, strategies, liberal vs. conservative, etc.
DOMESTIC issues: affordable homes, AIDS budget, drugs and alcohol abuse, law and order (crime), teen gangs, violence, catastrophic health insurance, Supreme Court, death penalty, other political issues, etc.
EDUCATION: college loan programs, student testing programs, school day length, role of teachers, government financial support for education, etc.
ENVIRONMENT: protects air/water resources, cleanup funds for environmental disasters, land recreation use, acid rain, etc.
FARM issues: farm credit and farm prices, limits on farm acreage, farm ownership, foreign farm markets, farmers trade bill, farm subsidy bills, etc.

FOREIGN POLICY: commitments to Israel and Arabs, Noriega and Ortega, talks with Gorby, Iran-contra scandal, Palestinian state, European political policies etc.
LABOR issues: increasing minimum wages, labor relations board membership, labor policy, plant closings, affirmative action, creation of new jobs, support for organized labor, strikes, union busting, etc.
ECONOMIC issues: both foreign and domestic, strength of U.S. dollar, trade deficits, budget deficits, capital gains taxes, 1992, European Community, etc.
NATIONAL DEFENSE: commitments to veteran's issues and strong military, bolster non-nuclear defenses, peace through strength intermediate range missiles, modernization of missile systems, destruction of ICBMs, repeal of War Powers Act, etc.
NUCLEAR DEFENSE: developing nuclear force as a deterrent, upgrading nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons freeze, SDI research and development, etc.
PATRIOTISM: pledge of allegiance in schools, flag burnings, etc.
WOMEN'S issues: day care, tax refunds for child care, equal pay, etc.
MISCELLANEOUS: any other topics.

In order to test the reliability of the coding process, an independent coder was asked to evaluate the coding sheets from all three elite newspapers by recoding at least ten percent of the sentences in stories originally coded in each newspaper. By using Holsti's formula for a Coefficient of Reliability, coder reliability was determined to be .85.[23]

FINDINGS

The first research question was concerned with the general coverage of elite newspapers in terms of candidates, issues, the campaign, and the political parties. Sentences in the elite newspapers were coded as either positive (+), negative (-), or neutral (0) (See Table 1).

TABLE 1: Percentages of coverage in three elite newspaper devoted to 1988 presidential candidates, election issues, the campaigns, and the parties.

Coverage	New York Times			London Times			Le Monde			
	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	
Candidates	25	37	38	19	30	52	22	47	32	(X^2=9.67; df=4, $p<.05$)
Issues	45	33	22	29	31	40	61	31	8	(X^2=33.93, df=4, $p<.001$)
Campaign	42	34	25	35	34	37	37	53	10	(X^2=14.39, df=4, $p<.01$)
Party	11	53	36	14	64	23	18	55	27	(X^2=6.01, df=4, n.s.)
AVE.	31	40	31	24	40	37	35	47	19	(X^2=8.66, df=4, n.s.)

Overall, newspaper coverage by three elite newspapers was consistently negative when considering all facets of the 1988 presidential campaign coverage, based on the total averages of positive, negative and neutral coverage ($X^2 = 8.66$, df=4, n.s.). Coverage in both the *New York Times* and the *Times* of London was more similar (at 40 percent) than the *Le Monde* , which carried a higher percentage (47 percent) of negative statements about all facets of the campaign, but these differences were not significant. In terms of candidates, the coverage between all three newspapers was significantly different (X^2=9.67, df=4, p<.05). Both the New York and London newspapers carried more positive statements about the candidates, while the Paris newspaper was decidedly more negative. Differences in general issues coverage were significant (X^2=33.93, df=4, p<.001), mainly because the London *Times* was more more positive in its issues coverage, while *Le Monde* carried more negative and neutral statements about issues in the campaign. Campaign strategy coverage comparisons between the three newspapers were significant (X^2=14.39, df=4, p<.01), and again the number of *Le Monde* negative statements influenced the comparison in this category. Political party coverage between all three elite newspapers was consistently similar and negative (X^2=6.01, df=4, n.s.).

The second research question was posed to see how the direction of elite newspaper coverage compared with editorial endorsements, if any, made by the three newspapers (See Table 2).

TABLE 2: Percentage of coverage in three elite newspaper devoted to the 1988 presidential candidates.

Coverage	N.Y. Times[1]			London Times[2]			Le Monde[3]			
	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	
George Bush	30	28	42	16	11	73	25	35	40	(X^2=29.58, df=4, p<.001)
Michael Dukakis	19	43	38	22	42	36	17	63	19	(X^2=13.45, df=4, p<.01)
Dan Quayle	7	71	23	23	60	17	26	32	42	(X^2=38.60, df=4, p<.001)
Lloyd Bentsen	0	30	70	11	6	83	0	100	0	(X^2=111.96, df=4, p<.001)

[1] Bush v. Dukakis (X^2=5.78, df=2, n.s.)
[2] Bush v. Dukakis (X^2=31.20, df=2, p<.001)
[3] Bush v. Dukakis (X^2=16.88, df=2, p<.001)

Although elite newspaper coverage of George Bush was significantly different (X^2=29.58, df=4, p<.001), it was overwhelming positive. This was surprising in some ways and not in others. The liberal *New York Times* endorsed Michael Dukakis as election day neared, but carried more positive front page coverage for Bush than for Dukakis. However, a comparison of coverage specifically in the New York newspaper for both the candidates did not reveal a significant difference (X^2=5.78, df=2, n.s.). Coverage of Bush on the front page of the New York newspaper was positive, but coverage of Dukakis was more negative than positive. Coverage in the conservative London newspaper influenced the outcome of the overall statistical analysis because the London paper not only endorsed Bush, it was unabashedly positive about his election chances. A comparison of candidate coverage specifically in the London paper was significantly different (X^2=31.20, df=2, p<.001), since the newspaper presented more positive than negative statements about Bush and more negative than positive statements about Dukakis. Candidate coverage in the Paris newspaper was significantly different (X^2=16.88, df=2, p<.001), but the left-wing *Le Monde* surprisingly gave positive coverage to George Bush and was overwhelming negative about Dukakis.

Coverage of vice presidential candidates in these three elite newspapers was revealing. Although coverage of both Quayle and Bentsen was significantly different in all three newspapers, the investigators were not comfortable with the findings because the actual numbers of statements coded were not very large. The *New York Times* carried 20 statements made by both vice presidential candidates, while the London *Times* published 35, and *Le Monde,* 10. Percentages show, however, that the New York paper carried more positive references to Bentsen than Quayle, as did the London newspaper. Only the Paris newspaper published more positive statements the about Republican VP rather than the Democratic VP.

The third research question was interested in pattern of attribution presented in three elite newspapers. Previous research had indicated that newspaper attribution was growing in coverage of election campaigns (See Table 3).

TABLE 3: Percentages of statement attribution (raw statement count) contributed by candidates, the newspaper, and other sources in three elite newspapers.

Category	NYTimes	London Times	Le Monde
Candidates	21 (588)	18 (254)	5 (50)
Newspapers	58 (1659)	71 (978)	89 (1027)
Other Sources	21 (594)	11 (153)	6 (38)
Raw Count Totals	(2841)	(1385)	(1151)

All three elite newspapers showed a similar pattern of attribution in their election campaign coverage. The majority of statements published were attributable to the newspapers and their political writers, since most of the stories were bylined stories. This should not be a surprising finding, particularly in European newspapers where readers traditionally have come to expect opinion and fact mixed together in the same story. Such a finding does, however, raise some questions as to the kind of perceptions U.S. and European readers are receiving from their political writers. Particularly, when this study illustrates that 40 percent or more of the coverage published about the election campaign was negative.

The fourth research question dealt with topics covered by elite newspapers during the 1988 election campaign. Table 4 illustrates that elite newspaper coverage was significantly similar (W=.671, X^2=24.16, df=12, $p<.05$).[24]

TABLE 4: Percentage of campaign coverage devoted to 14 issues in elite newspapers.

Topic	NY Times	London Times	Le Monde
Abortion	2.4	.5	.3
Campaign	64.3	71.1	52.7
Domestic	7.9	4.1	15.6
Education	1.4	.1	.2
Environment	1.1	.1	.2
Farm	0.0	.4	0.0
Foreign	4.4	4.1	7.6
Labor	.9	1.1	0.0
Economic	5.9	3.5	4.4
National Defense	2.5	2.2	2.0
Nuclear Defense	.5	2.4	.2
Patriotism	.6	.9	1.3
Women	.7	.1	3.4
Miscellaneous	7.3	9.4	12.1

W=.671, X2=24.16, df=12, p<.05

Campaign issues dominated elite newspaper coverage, and their coverage priorities were not very far apart. The top five campaign issues that dominated the coverage in each paper is tabulated as follows:

NY Times	London Times	LeMonde
1. campaign issues	1. campaign issues	1. campaign issues
2. domestic issues	2. domestic issues	2. domestic issues
3. economic issues	3. foreign policy	3. foreign policy
4. foreign policy	4. economic issues	4. economic issues
5. national defense	5. nuclear defense	5. women's issues

The overwhelming number of sentences on campaign issues far outweighed sentences devoted to other issues which meant that even these elite newspapers were more concerned about covering the "horserace" than the substantive issues of the campaign. This is surprising considering that cultural and geographical interests might have dictated different priorities for the European elite newspapers, although foreign policy was higher on the list for each of the European papers than it was for the U.S. paper..

DISCUSSION

In this cross-cultural study of three elite newspapers, some surprising differences occurred in coverage of the 1988 U.S. presidential campaign. In terms of overall performance, all three newspapers covered the campaign in negative fashion; however, that coverage was not without some contradiction in individual coverage. Although the liberal New York newspaper had endorsed Michael Dukakis editorially, the *Times* carried more positive front page coverage of Bush in its lead stories, although the differences between Bush and Dukakis were not significant. Such an outcome provides more evidence that news coverage is seldom connected to, or influenced by, editorial coverage in the same newspaper as Stempel, *et. al.*, have reported on numerous occasions.

Campaign coverage in the conservative *London Times* ran true-to-form, in that the *Times* editorially endorsed Bush, and their news coverage during the campaign reinforced their endorsement. However, news coverage in *Le Monde* did not follow party lines. The intellectual left-wing Paris newspaper, which might have been more sympathetic toward Michael Dukakis, became disenchanted with the campaign early and French news coverage was more positive for the Republican ticket. Such an outcome is probably best explained by the conservative London newspaper:

> In terms of European--and specifically British--interests, Bush has the greater appeal in his specific policy commitments, and his career so far contains a far more promising international dimension. Dukakis promises competence at home but belies his promise by suggesting narrow naivete in the international field.[25]

If the New York and London papers, however, had been left to make the decision about whom should be president and vice president, there is some evidence in this study to suggest that they might have been more comfortable with a Bush-Bentsen ticket. The selection of Quayle as a running mate by Bush was not a popular idea in either the New York or London newspapers.

As in previous studies, the trend toward more independent coverage, or newspaper attribution, was evident in this study. Although such a finding might be more acceptable for the European newspapers considering their reporting traditions, the fact that a minimum 58 percent of the statements made in the campaign coverage could be attributed to the newspapers themselves has been of some interest to investigators. Graber suggests that fewer quotes from candidates in campaign stories usually means reporters will rely on horserace coverage rather than the issues promoted by the candidates.[26] There is other evidence to suggest that because election campaigns are so long, and the information about candidate personalities and policies can only be played so many times, reporters tend to fall back on candidate and campaign strategies, or horserace issues.[27] These notions become more credible when viewed in combination with the topics covered by these three elite newspapers during the presidential campaign.

Coverage of substantive issues was virtually nonexistent, which reinforces other 1988 campaign studies. Over 60 percent of the sentences coded in this study dealt with the "horserace" approach to coverage of the 1988 presidential campaign. The similarity in topics among all three newspapers, although poorly covered with the exception of campaign issues, was surprising to investigators considering the differences in the cultural and geographical interests of the U.S. and Europe. Devotion to the campaign horserace is a "tradition" in the U.S., but investigators expected a more substantive approach from the subjective, ideological, and sometimes polemic European press. What is clear from this study is that all three elite newspapers were setting a subtle media agenda for their readers in their lead or primary stories. In general, the newspaper attributed stories seem to be driving the coverage. Furthermore, the coverage did present a negative and shallow perception of the 1988 presidential campaign in the sense that there was more coverage of the horserace than the issues. The pattern of those issues that were covered was surprisingly similar which probably suggests that the political arena was able to establish its own agenda, at least in the issues with the highest visibility.

NOTES

[1] Asa Briggs, "An Oxford Don Watches the Election," *Gannett Center Journal*, 2: 43-56 (1989).

[2] Jay G. Blumler and Jack M. McLeod, "Systematizing Election Communication Research: A Transatlantic Perspective," *Mass Comm Review*, 1 & 2: 30-35 (1987).

[3] John Merrill, "Global Elite: A Newspaper Community of Reason," *Gannett Center Journal*, 4:93-101 (1990). Merrill includes the New York and Paris papers on his list, and says that the London newspaper is "aspiring to regain full membership in the world's elite."

[4] Merrill, p. 93.

[5] Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36:179-187 (1972).

[6] Richard Hofstetter, *Bias in the News--Network Television Coverage of the 1972 Election Campaign*, (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1976).

[7] John M. Russonello and Frank Wolf, "Newspaper Coverage of the 1976 and 1968 Presidential Campaigns," *Journalism Quarterly*, 56:360-364, 432 (1979).

[8] Robert G. Meadow, "Issues Emphasis and Public Opinion: The Media During the 1972 Presidential Campaign," *American Politics Quarterly*, 4:189 (1975).

[9] Bruce H. Westley, Charles E. Higbie, Timothy Burke, David J. Lippert, Leonard Maurer and Vernon A. Stone, "The News Magazines and the 1960 Conventions," *Journalism Quarterly*, 40:525-531, 647 (1963).

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[14] Guido H. Stempel III and John W. Windhauser, "Coverage by the Prestige Press of the 1988 Presidential Campaign," *Journalism Quarterly*, 66:894-896, 919 (1989).

[15] Erika G. King, "Thematic Coverage of the 1988 Presidential Primaries: A Comparison of USA Today and the New York Times," *Journalism Quarterly,* 67:83-89 (1990)

[16] Marjorie Randon Hershey, "The Campaign and the Media," in Gerald M. Pomper, ed., *The Election of 1988* (New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1989), pp. 73-102.

[17] Thimios Zaharopoulos, "Cultural Proximity in International News Coverage: 1988 U.S. Presidential Campaign in the Greek Press," *Journalism Quarterly,* 67:190-194 (1990).

[18] Sandra E. Moriarty and Gina M. Garramone, "A Study of Newsmagazine Photographs of the 1984 Presidential Campaign," *Journalism Quarterly,* 63:728-734 (1986)

[19] Sandra E. Moriarty and Mark Popovich, "Newsmagazine Visuals and the 1988 Presidential Election," AEJMC Annual Convention, Washington D.C., 1989.

[20] Richard W. Budd, Robert W. Thorp, and Lewis Donohew, *Content Analysis of Communications* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967); see also, Evarts and Stempel, 1974.

[21] "U.S. Politics Without Policies: A Matter of Expediency," *World Press Review,* May, 1988, p.10. Reprint of *Le Monde* editorial.

[22] Budd, Thorp, and Donohew.

23 See Budd, Thorp, and Donohew; and Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1980) pp. 146-148.

[24] Kendall Coefficient of Concordance was used to test the topic rankings of three elite newspapers. See Sidney Siegel, *Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956) pp. 229-239.

[25] Reprint from *The Times* of London editorial, *World Press Review,* November 1988, p. 6.

[26] Graber, 1984.

[27] Thomas E. Patterson, *The Mass Media Election: How Americans Choose Their President* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1980) p. 30.

VISUAL IMAGES OF U.S. POLITICIANS PRESENTED IN WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINES

by

Jisuk Woo
The Annenberg School for Communication
University of Pennsylvania
3620 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6220
215/898-7401

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VISUAL IMAGES OF U.S. POLITICIANS PRESENTED IN WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINES

This paper examines the visual images of U.S. politicians presented in the two national weekly news magazines--Newsweek and Time. I considered visual presentation of politicians as a hidden means of potential bias in news media which may favor Republican or Democratic politicians. Focusing on news magazines which provide highly representative images of that week, I explore how politicians have been presented over the forty-four year period from 1947 to 1990.

Imagery plays a crucial role in American politics because personal attractiveness, rather than integrity or ability, has become the most important characteristic of a candidate for public office (O'Keefe and Sheinkopf, 1974). According to interviews conducted by O'Keefe and Sheinkopf (1974) during the 1972 presidential race, the majority of voters based their voting decisions on a candidate's image rather than on knowledge about a candidate's stance on special issues. It was also found that a person's physical appearance produces a clear, politically relevant image of that person's character, such that these nonverbally mediated perceptions and judgments influence voters' choice (Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty and Harris, 1986).

Despite the importance of images of politicians in public perception, investigations of media coverage regarding political events and politicians, undertaken so far, have dealt mostly with the verbal content of mass media. To date, all the means of representation which are crucial to image making, such as camera perspective and visual composition, have not been taken into much account by communication scholars. Moreover, the small body of studies exploring visual images of politicians focused on the television medium (Kepplinger, 1982; Messaris et al., 1979; Tiemens, 1978), while news magazines are also main sources for images of politicians which carry highly representative images of that week.

Studies on media's campaign coverage examined whether there has been any bias or preferential treatment to one party, providing conflicting results from one to another. Some studies showed that relatively equal space and treatment was given to both Democratic and Republican candidates (Stempel, 1961; Stempel and Windhauser, 1984; Evart and Stempel, 1974). In other studies analyzing images of candidates during political campaigns, bias in visual-content favorable to one candidate was found (Tiemens, 1978; Moryarty and Garramone, 1986). Often the visual bias was so subtle that the respondents might not always notice them. More strikingly, the visual presentation of the candidates or reactions of the public was quite different when there were no significant differences between the two candidates in verbal statements of journalists (Lowry, 1974; Kepplinger, 1982).

While other means of representation, such as different amount of coverage, order of coverage, positive or negative assertion, and so forth are more recognizable to viewers, visual means are usually concealed so that not many people are able to recognize their existence (Mandell and Shaw, 1973; Kraus, 1962, p.283). Since viewers have difficulty being aware of biases expressed through visual devices (Gerbner, 1958; Messaris, 1990), the way news magazines present the visual images of politicians could have a strong, yet subtle impact in shaping viewers' perceptions. Therefore, if the two main political parties have been differently presented in the national news magazines, the influence on public perceptions and voting decisions of the U.S. electorate might be consequential in

American political arena, where images of political figures tend to be no less important than their substantive issues (O'Keefe and Sheinkoff, 1974; Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty and Harris, 1986).

There is an argument that the awareness of how images are created and the knowledge of visual devices would promote critical viewing, making viewers less susceptible to manipulation (Messaris, 1988; Messaris, 1990). If this is true, exploring the ways in which visual images of politicians are presented in news magazines would enhance our knowledge of the visual devices which may be concealed contributing to our understanding of the way in which mass media represent images of political figures.

This paper presents a content analysis of visual images of U.S politicians of the two major political parties --Democratic and Republican-- in two national weekly news magazines--Time and Newsweek. The representation of politicians of each party was examined by exploring 1) how much attention the news magazines gave to the politicians of each party, 2) how much emphasis the politicians received, and 3) from what perspective the politicians were portrayed. Therefore, attention, emphasis, and perspective were employed as three indices by which to examine the representation of the politicians.

The attention that has been given to the politicians of each party was measured by summing the frequency of the politicians' appearance in the news magazines. The emphasis that has been given to the politicians was determined by exploring the page in which the photograph appears, the size of the photograph, and the position of the photograph on the page. The perspective from which the politicians of each party are portrayed was examined by assessing the attributes that contribute to the favorable or unfavorable portrayal of the politicians: activity, facial expression, and context. Two coders independently collected the data of this study. Disagreements in coding a politician's attribute of the perspective index were considered as neutral for the analysis of the study.

METHOD

Sample

By randomly selecting one issue in every three months from 1947 to 1990 from each Time and Newsweek, 352 issues of the news magazines were selected as a sample of the study. U.S. News and World Report, which was available only since 1968, was excluded in this long-term focused study. Any photographs of U.S. congressmen printed in these sample issues were analyzed, including those on the cover of the magazine or on the index page. Also included were those candidates running for congressional office or the presidency. Only the national level politicians were examined. Those politicians on the state level such as governors were excluded due to the volume of photographs which appeared in news magazines for forty four years. Photographs of the U.S. Presidents and cabinet members were also excluded. Those photographs including two or more politicians were coded once for each politician and were treated as two or more separate photographs in the analysis.

Coding Procedure

Each photograph was coded for political party, gender, race, magazine, publication date, page on which a photograph appeared, photograph size, photograph position on the page, and three attributes which comprise the perspective index: activity of a politician, facial expression of a politician, and context of the photograph.

The page on which a photograph appeared was coded as cover page, index page, front half of inside pages, or back half of inside pages. The photograph size was coded as full page, larger than a half page, about a half page, between a half page and a quarter page, about a quarter page, or smaller than a quarter page size. The position of a photograph was coded as the top, middle, or bottom third of the page. Full page photographs were coded as top of the page. A method combining these three variables together was designed to examine the overall emphasis that was given to politicians of each party. According to the number of categories in the three emphasis variables, a four point scale (1, 2, 3, 4) was given to the page variable, a six point scale (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) to the size variable, and a three point scale (1, 2, 3) to the position variable. Mean scores for each variable were obtained in this way and total mean emphasis score was also obtained by adding the three mean scores of the variables. In order to balance the weight of each variables with the emphasis index, means scores of page, size, and position variables were multiplied by numbers of 3, 2, 4 respectively. For example, the mean score of the page variable was multiplied by 3 before added so as to have 12 as its range.

Each visual attribute for perspective --activity, facial expressions, and context-- was coded as a politician appearing in a clearly favorable way in terms of that attribute, a politician appearing in a neutral way in terms of that attribute, or a politician appearing in a clearly unfavorable way in terms of that attribute. Each visual attribute consisted of a three point scale (2, 1, 0), ranging from the most favorable value on that attribute to the least favorable value.

In the Ebong study (1990) of viewers' interpretations of visual imagery in political advertisements, respondents generally preferred images of politicians who were photographed as moving actively. Since the images of politicians who are interacting with other people can promote imaginary interaction with the politicians (Messaris, 1990), the politicians' activity will be an important factor in assessing the favorability of the image of the politician. Accordingly, in the attribute of activity, politicians photographed as moving dynamically or interacting with other people were generally considered as being more favorably treated than those photographed as being stationary. Therefore, a politician who was photographed as shaking hands, waiving to a crowd, kissing babies, or involved with other dynamic and active behavior was generally coded as favorable on the attribute of activity. If a politician was photographed as being involved with passive or negative behavior such as fighting, the photograph was generally coded as unfavorable on the attribute of activity. However, the final judgment depended on the specific details of each picture in this case, as in all others.

Coding for the attribute of facial expressions was relatively straightforward. Some of the examples of favorable or unfavorable portrayal on the attribute of facial expressions were as follows. If a politician was photographed with a happy, cheerful, smiling, or confident look on his/her face, the photograph was generally coded as favorable in terms of facial expressions. If a politician was photographed as unhappy, worried, tired, or frowning on his or her face, the photograph was generally coded as unfavorable in terms of facial expressions.

Ebong (1990) also found out that among the photographs of politicians used in political advertisements, images of politicians with families, babies, or American flags were generally preferred by viewers. Thus, in addition to the context with crowd and colleagues that Moriarty and Popovich (1989) considered in their study, families, babies, and American flags were regarded as a special contextual elements of photographs in this study. For instance, if a politician was photographed as being with families, babies, cheering crowds, attentive colleagues, or the American flags, the photograph was generally coded as favorable in terms of the context. If a politician was photographed as being with a hostile crowd or colleagues, the photograph was generally coded as unfavorable in terms of the context.

The above descriptions of favorable and unfavorable attributes served only as an initial framework for coding because these descriptions cannot be automatically regarded as favorable or unfavorable. For instance, a certain activity of a politician such as shaking hands was only assessed as favorable or unfavorable according to the context in which the politician was placed. Therefore, unless the two coders agreed, an attribute of a photograph was not considered as favorable or unfavorable. The inter-coder reliability for the perspective scores was 92.5%.

RESULTS

Attention

The attention that the news magazines gave to politicians was explored by examining the relative frequency with which each party's politicians appeared in the news magazines. Six hundred and thirteen photographs in Time and 527 in Newsweek, comprising a total of 1140 photographs, were found and analyzed. Democratic politicians received more attention by news magazines than Republican politicians. Democratic politicians accounted for 55% (627) of photographs, while the Republican politicians accounted for 45% (513) of photographs.

However, this difference in the absolute number of politicians of each party presented in news magazines should be considered in relation to the difference in the number of politicians in Congress, because Democrats have usually possessed more seats than Republicans. Looking at relative differences between 1947 and 1990, Democrats occupied 58% (310 per two-year congressional term) of the seats in Congress and Republicans occupied 42% (223 per two-year congressional term) of the seats. Therefore, if the relative number of politicians of each party in the magazines is compared with the actual number of politicians in Congress, Democratic politicians could be said to be slightly under-represented in news magazines.

In terms of the relative frequency of the photographs of politicians, the pattern of coverage for politicians in the two news magazines did not vary significantly (Table 1). Although more photographs of politicians were found in Time (613) than in Newsweek (527), both magazines proportionately presented more Democrats than Republicans, with Time presenting 56% Democrats and Newsweek presenting 54% Democrats.

Table 1: Proportion of Photographs of Politicians by Political Party and by News Magazine (1947-1990; Numbers in parentheses)

	% in Time	% in Newsweek
Republican	44 (269)	46 (244)
Democratic	56 (344)	54 (283)
Total	100 (613)	100 (527)

X^2=0.669, df=1, not significant at .05 level

Next, the long-term trend of the attention given to politicians of each party by news magazines was explored. The 44 years of the study were divided into four-year periods according to each presidential term. Because the data of this study started in 1947 and the next presidential term started in 1949, the first analytic period consisted of the data from 1947 through 1948. Following this, every period consisted of data grouped in four-year intervals, except for the last term, which started in 1989 and ended in 1990 when the data of this study ended. In this way, 12 time periods were created.

Table 2: Number of Photographs of Politicians by Political Party and by Time Period

Period	Republican	Democratic
1: 1947-1948	30	17
2: 1949-1952	73	39
3: 1953-1956	54	54
4: 1957-1960	28	64
5: 1961-1964	33	42
6: 1965-1968	44	40
7: 1969-1972	40	55
8: 1973-1976	28	86
9: 1977-1980	58	59
10: 1981-1984	64	54
11: 1985-1988	52	101
12: 1989-1990	09	16
Total	513	627

For each presidential period, the attention that politicians of each party received was examined on a frequency basis (Table 2). Both news magazines gave greater attention to Democratic politicians than to Republican politicians in terms of the sheer overall quantity. It is interesting to note that in the early periods, Republican politicians received greater attention than Democrats, while this tendency was reversed in 1957-1960. After this period, Democratic politicians continued to receive greater attention by news magazines, unless each party's politicians received a similar amount of attention.

It might be useful to examine how the attention given to each party's politicians is related to the actual number of their politicians in Congress. Therefore, the relative frequency of the photographs of politicians in news magazines was compared with the relative number of politicians of the two parties in Congress.

The relative frequency of politicians presented in news magazines was calculated by dividing the number of Republican photographs by the number of Democratic photographs (Table 3). The relative number of politicians in Congress was calculated in the same way. In seven time periods Republican politicians appeared more frequently as compared with their actual proportion in Congress while Democratic politicians appeared less frequently as compared with their actual proportion in Congress. Democratic politicians were presented more frequently compared with their actual proportion in Congress in five time periods. Therefore, the number of time periods in which Republicans versus Democrats received greater attention, compared with their actual proportion in Congress, was not largely different between the two parties.

Table 3: Relative Proportion* of Republican and Democratic Politicians in News Magazines and in Congress by Time Period (Numbers of Republicans/Democrats in parentheses)

Period	Relative Proportion of Politicians in News Magazines	Relative Proportion of Politicians in Congress
1: 1947-1948	**1.77** (30/17)	1.28 (297/233)
2: 1949-1952	**1.87** (73/39)	0.77 (459/599)
3: 1953-1956	**1.00** (54/54)	0.96 (519/539)
4: 1957-1960	0.44 (28/64)	**0.69** (435/630)
5: 1961-1964	**0.79** (33/42)	0.65 (420/651)
6: 1965-1968	**1.10** (44/40)	0.59 (395/675)
7: 1969-1972	0.73 (40/55)	**0.75** (458/610)
8: 1973-1976	0.33 (28/86)	**0.64** (415/650)
9: 1977-1980	**0.98** (58/59)	0.55 (380/688)
10: 1981-1984	**1.19** (64/54)	0.77 (463/603)
11: 1985-1988	0.52 (52/101)	**0.75** (458/612)
12: 1989-1990	0.56 (09/16)	**0.68** (216/319)

* Number of Republicans divided by number of Democrats

Emphasis

The emphasis that the news magazines gave to politicians was revealed by examining the three variables: 1) the page on which the photographs appeared, 2) the size of the photographs, and 3) the photograph's position on the page. In terms of the page, most photographs of both Democrats and Republicans (89%) appeared in the first half of the magazine (Table 4). No statistically significant difference between the two parties was found in terms of the page on which the photographs appeared.

Analyzing the size of photographs showed a statistically significant difference between the two parties. Although the majority of the photographs were smaller than a quarter page, the photographs of Democratic politicians were found to be larger than those of Republicans (Table 5). In terms of the size of the photographs, Democratic politicians received significantly greater emphasis than Republican politicians.

Table 4: Pagetype of Photographs by Political Party (1947-1990)

Pagetype	% of Republicans (N)	% of Democrats (N)
Cover	1.2 (6)	2.2 (14)
Index	2.9 (15)	3.0 (19)
First half of inside	91.2 (468)	87.8 (550)
Last half of inside	4.7 (24)	7.0 (44)
Total	100.0 (513)	100.0 (627)

X^2=5.661, df=3, not significant at .05 level

Table 5: Size of Photographs by Political Party (1947-1990)

Photograph Size	% of Republicans (N)	% of Democrats (N)
As large or larger than a half page*	1.8 (9)	4.3 (27)
Between smaller than a half and larger than a quarter	3.5 (18)	3.7 (23)
About a quarter	17.0 (87)	21.7 (136)
Smaller than a quarter page	77.8 (399)	70.3 (441)
Total	100.0 (513)	100.0 (627)

X^2=13,471, df=5, p<0.01

* Originally, the photograph size was coded as six categories. The category of 'as large or larger than a half page' is created by combining three categories of full page, larger than a half page, and about a half page in order to formulate a crosstab here.

Table 6: Position of Photographs by Political Party (1947-1990)

Photo Position	% of Republicans (N)	% of Democrats (N)
Top	38 (196)	41 (256)
Middle	35 (179)	33 (208)
Bottom	27 (138)	26 (163)
Total	100 (513)	100 (627)

X^2=0.822, df=2, not significant at .05 level

Considering the photograph's position on the page, no statistically significant differences were found between the two parties. Politicians of both parties were most likely to be presented on the top of the pages, second most likely to be presented on the middle of the pages, and least likely to be presented at the bottom of the pages (Table 6). The position of photographs was not statistically different between politicians of the two parties.

The emphasis that the news magazines gave to politicians was explored in terms of pagetype, size, and position of the photographs. Overall, of the three variables, only the size of photographs showed a clear difference, giving more emphasis to Democratic politicians than to Republican politicians. The page and position of photographs did not show a statistically significant difference between the two parties.

The three variables indicating the emphasis that news magazines gave to politicians--page, size, position of photographs-- were measured separately. It seemed to be useful to take all the three variables jointly into account. A method combining these three variables together was designed to examine the overall emphasis that was given to politicians of each party. By transforming each category of the three variables into scales, mean scores for the variables of page, size, position of photographs were obtained. A total mean emphasis score was also obtained by adding the three mean scores of the variables. (In order to balance the weight of each variables in the emphasis index, means scores of page, size, and position variables were multiplied by weights of 3, 2, 4 respectively. Refer to methods part for more detail.)

The mean emphasis scores of the three variables showed the same findings as the cross-tabulations from the previous analysis of the three variables. Democratic politicians scored significantly higher in the size of the photographs than Republican politicians (Table 7). Page and position scores did not show a statistically significant difference between the two parties. In addition to these findings, the total emphasis index combining the effects of the three variables together was significantly higher for Democratic politicians than for Republicans, demonstrating that news magazines clearly gave more emphasis to Democratic politicians than to Republican politicians.

Table 7: Mean Emphasis Scores by Political Party (1947-1990)

Score	Republican (N=513)	Democratic (N=627)
Page of Photographs	2.01	2.01
Size of Photographs	1.31	****1.48**
Place of Photographs	2.11	2.15
Total Index	17.08	***17.59**

* Two tailed t-test was significant at .05 level.

** Two tailed t-test was significant at .01 level.

The long-term trend of the emphasis that news magazines gave to politicians of each party was examined by dividing the 44 years of the study into four-year terms according to the presidential terms. In no time period was the difference in the total emphasis index between the two parties statistically significant (Table 8). Most of the differences were found in the size of the photographs, always with Democratic politicians being portrayed in larger pictures. Between 1947 and 1948, the emphasis given to politicians was not significantly different between the two parties. In the second time period, between 1949 and 1952, the size of photographs was larger for Democrats, and this difference was nearly significant (.05<p<.10).

Table 8: Mean Emphasis Score by Party and by Time Period

Period	Republican				Democratic			
	Pagetype	Size	Position	Total	Pagetype	Size	Position	Total
47'-48'	2.07	1.37	2.13	17.47	2.00	1.12	2.00	16.23
49'-52'	2.04	1.27	2.11	17.11	2.00	1.54	2.00	17.08
53'-56'	1.98	1.37	1.98	16.61	2.00	1.61	1.96	17.07
57'-60'	2.07	1.54	2.18	18.00	2.08	1.42	2.17	17.77
61'-64'	1.97	1.12	2.30	17.36	2.12	**1.62***	2.14	18.17
65'-68'	2.00	1.11	2.14	16.77	1.90	**1.48****	1.93	16.50
69'-72'	1.83	1.08	1.85	15.03	1.87	1.22	2.04	16.20
73'-76'	1.96	1.46	2.07	17.11	1.99	1.38	2.28	17.85
77'-80'	1.93	1.31	2.12	16.90	1.97	1.34	2.07	16.85
81'-84'	2.02	1.45	2.06	17.20	2.11	1.46	2.20	18.07
85'-88'	2.08	1.37	2.29	18.12	2.04	1.73	2.31	18.81
89'-90'	**2.56***	1.00	2.44	19.44	2.06	**1.38^**	2.63	19.44

* Two tailed t-test is significant at .05 level.

** Two tailed t-test was significant at .01 level.

^ T-test was not applicable since one of the samples had no variance. However, with the mean difference of 0.375 and the second sample's standard error of 0.125, quite a big difference between the two parties could be inferred here.

After the two time periods (1952-1960) when the emphasis scores were not significantly different for Democrats and Republicans, Democratic politicians again appeared in clearly larger photographs than Republicans from 1961 to 1968. But this size difference was not reflected in the total emphasis index, so that the combined emphasis index score was not significantly different between the two parties. During the next four time periods from 1969 to 1984, the emphasis given to politicians was not significantly different for the two parties.

In the period between 1985 and 1988, photograph size was again significantly larger for Democratic politicians than for Republican politicians without affecting differences in the total emphasis index. In the next time period from 1989 to 1990, Democratic politicians were once again portrayed in larger pictures than Republicans (at $.05<p<.10$). In this period, surprisingly, the pagetype score was higher for Republican politicians than for Democrats. This is the first time in the study that Republican politicians received more emphasis in terms of any of the three variables, page, size, and place of photographs. It remains to be seen whether this is a deviation from the trend of giving more emphasis to Democrats or a beginning of a new trend favoring Republicans in terms of pagetype.

In summary, the news magazines gave significantly greater emphasis to Democratic politicians than to Republican politicians. This greater emphasis given to Democrats seems to have been largely contributed by larger photographs of Democrats in both news magazines. When the long-term trend of the emphasis was examined, the trend of presenting Democrats at larger photographs was even more clear, beginning in the second time period (1949-1952) and remaining until the last time period (1989-1990). It can be concluded that the news magazines gave more emphasis to Democrats than to Republicans in presenting politicians, particularly in terms of the size of photographs.

Perspective

The perspective from which the politicians of each party were presented by news magazines was examined by assessing the average scores that politicians of each party obtained in the three attributes of activity, facial expression, and context. The politicians pictured being active were usually those who waive to a crowd or are giving a speech, and the frequently used favorable facial expression of politicians was a smile. The most frequently used contexts of presenting politicians favorably were cheering crowd, colleagues, children, and babies.

The perspective from which the news magazines presented politicians was not significantly different between the two political parties (Table 9). The scores of the three attributes were explored separately. None of these attributes demonstrated statistically significant difference between the two parties.

Table 9: Mean Perspective Scores by Political Party (1947-1990)

Score	Republican (N=513)	Democratic (N=627)
Activity	1.08	1.10
Facial Expression	1.22	1.27
Context	1.11	1.09
Total Index	3.41	3.46

Two tailed t-test was not significant at .05 level.

In both news magazines the mean perspective indices were not different for Republican and Democratic politicians (Table 10). As far as the individual indices are concerned, the context attribute in Time was the only attribute in which Republicans received a higher score, and at the same time, this was the only attribute in which a statistically significant difference was found. In sum, both news magazines portrayed Democrats and Republicans in a relatively even way in terms of the total perspective index.

Table 10: Mean Perspective Scores by Political Party and by News Magazine (1947-1990)

	Republican (N=513)	Democratic (N=627)
Time		
Activity	1.10	1.11
Facial Expression	1.24	1.30
Context	***1.13**	1.08
Total Index	3.48	3.491
Newsweek		
Activity	1.06	1.09
Facial Expression	1.19	1.23
Context	1.09	1.11
Total Index	3.34	3.42

* Two tailed t-test was significant at .05 level.

As with the emphasis scores, the long-term basis to examine the perspective from which the news magazines presented politicians of each party was the analysis of four-year periods according to the respective presidential terms (Table 11). Democratic politicians tended to be portrayed more favorably in early time periods and Republican politicians tended to be presented more favorably in later time periods. This long term analysis also illustrated that Democratic politicians tended to be portrayed favorably in terms of facial expressions, while Republican politicians tended to be portrayed favorably in terms of the context of photographs.

In the first time period between 1947 and 1948, Democratic politicians obtained a higher mean perspective score than Republicans. Though individually, the three attributes were not significantly different between the two parties at the .05 level, Democrats received a significantly higher total perspective score than Republicans mainly due to the difference in the facial expression attribute ($.05<p<.10$).

Democratic and Republican politicians did not score differently in the next time period (1949-1952). Yet, from 1953 to 1956, Democratic politicians again received a significantly higher score than Republicans in terms of the facial expression attribute and the total perspective index. Therefore, between 1947 and 1956, Democratic politicians were presented more favorably than Republicans, and it was largely due to the fact that Democratic politicians scored higher in the facial expression attribute.

In the next period between 1956 and 1960, there was a reversal in that Republican politicians were portrayed in a more favorable context than Democratic politicians. However, the difference in the context attribute was not reflected in the combined perspective index. Thus the mean perspective score of politicians of each party was not significantly different, although Republicans scored higher than Democrats for the first time in the study. From 1961 through 1976, the perspective from which news magazines presented politicians remained similar between the two parties. In these four time periods, the mean perspective scores slightly fluctuated but their differences between the two parties were not statistically significant.

In the period between 1976 and 1980, Republican politicians were presented in a significantly more favorable way than Democrats. The mean perspective index was higher for Republicans due to the significantly higher score of the context attribute (at the .05 level) and the activity attribute (at the .08 level). After this period, however, the perspective score did not show any clear difference between the two parties. The perspective from which the news magazines presented politicians of each party was relatively similar from 1981 to 1990.

Table 11: Mean Perspective Scores of Politicians by Political Party and by Time Period

Period	Republican				Democratic			
	Behavior	Facial E	Context	Total	Behavior	Facial E	Context	Total
47'-48'	1.00	1.10	1.03	3.13	1.18	1.41	1.06	**3.65***
49'-52'	1.03	1.19	1.12	3.34	1.05	1.23	1.13	3.41
53'-56'	1.00	1.13	1.07	3.20	1.07	**1.37***	1.17	**3.61****
57'-60'	1.18	1.39	**1.39***	3.96	1.11	1.34	1.19	3.64
61'-64'	1.06	1.15	1.27	3.49	1.05	1.33	1.14	3.52
65'-68'	1.09	1.16	1.07	3.32	1.13	1.15	1.13	3.40
69'-72'	1.15	1.28	1.08	3.50	1.11	1.36	1.07	3.55
73'-76'	1.07	1.25	1.04	3.36	1.07	1.11	1.04	3.21
77'-80'	1.21	1.26	**1.19***	**3.66***	1.09	1.14	1.07	3.29
81'-84'	1.05	1.09	1.03	3.17	1.11	1.20	1.04	3.35
85'-88'	1.14	1.44	1.06	3.64	1.16	1.40	1.09	3.64
89'-90'	1.00	1.22	1.00	3.22	1.00	1.06	0.94	3.00

* Two tailed t-test was significant at .05 level.

** Two tailed t-test was significant at .01 level.

Facial E = Facial Expression

In conclusion, Democratic and Republican politicians were presented more favorably in different time periods and the nature of the favorability was different in terms of scoring of different attributes. Democratic politicians tended to be presented in news magazines more favorably in early time periods (1947-1948, 1953-1956, 1961-1964), while Republicans tended to be presented more favorably in later time periods (1957-1960, 1977-1980). The fact that the politicians of each party were favorably presented in different time periods contributed to diluting the difference in the total perspective scores between the two parties, resulting in the lack of statistical difference in the overall perspective scores. Yet, the nature of favorable presentations was different between the two parties. Favorable presentation of Democrats in news magazines was mostly in terms of facial expression, while Republicans were portrayed favorably in terms of the context of photographs. This is reflected in the overall scores of each attribute obtained by politicians of each party over the 44 year period (refer to Table 10). The facial expression score was higher for Republicans while the activity and context score was higher for Democratic politicians, although these differences were not demonstrated as statistically significant.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the visual images of U.S. politicians presented in the two national weekly news magazines, Time and Newsweek. The way in which politicians of the two major parties, Republican and Democratic, have been presented over the forty-four year period from 1947 to 1990 was explored, focusing on news magazines which provide highly representative images of that week.

The findings of the study reveal that politicians of each party were presented in a relatively even way by the news magazines. The findings differ from other visual studies on media coverage regarding political events and politicians, where bias in visual content favorable to one candidate was usually found (Tiemens, 1978; Moryarty and Garramone, 1986; Moryarty and Popovich, 1989). In general, this study on news magazines does not support the notion that there was bias or preferential treatment favoring one party over the other.

In terms of the frequency of appearance, Democratic politicians received greater attention than Republicans, but Democratic politicians were slightly under-represented when compared with their actual relative proportion in Congress. Although Democratic politicians received greater emphasis in terms of their larger photographs, conflicting with the result of the Moryarty and Popovich's study on news magazines during 1988 presidential campaign, the politicians of either party were not portrayed in a clearly more favorable way. In other words, politicians of each party received similar scores in their perspective indices measuring their activity, facial expressions, and the context of photographs.

However, this study shows a notable difference in the nature of the favorable portrayal of politicians between the two parties. Republican politicians were often presented in a favorable context in photographs, while Democratic politicians were presented favorably in terms of facial expressions. Democratic politicians presented in news magazines were more likely to smile or look cheerful and confident in their facial expressions. On the contrary, Republican politicians were more likely to be portrayed interacting with their colleagues. It seems that the visual image of politicians in news magazines may reflect and perpetuate the images of cheerful and agreeable Democrats versus united and powerful Republicans.

Further research might elaborate upon the findings of the study in order to determine in what way the presentation of politicians in visual media is related with various political situations in the U.S. Such research might include analysis on how attention, emphasis, and perspective that politicians of each party received relate differently to political office held, and analysis on possible effects, such as on the proportion of politicians in Congress and on the following Presidential elections.

However, caution is required in extrapolating from the content analysis to any presumed effects. These differences in the visual image of politicians might be subtle, and to most viewers may have been imperceptible. Thus, the extent to which they influenced viewers' perceptions can only be conjectured. As discussed earlier in the study, there is an argument that the awareness of how images are created and visual devices are used could make people less susceptible to influence, while studies on the visual aspects of media coverage and their effects on public perception and reaction suggested that visual images in mass media influence viewers' perception in an unconscious way (McCain, Chilberg, and Wakshlag, 1977; Mandell and Shaw, 1973; O'Keefe and Sheinkopf, 1974; Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty and Harris, 1986). Therefore, certain questions which were beyond the scope of the present study might be worth further inquiry, such as the extent to which the viewers are aware of the differences in the visual images of politicians and the way in which this awareness affects people's perceptions and responses.

Although the content analysis of the visual presentation of politicians did not allow this study to directly examine its implications and consequences, the results of the present study provide a starting point for examining the relationship of visual images of U.S. politicians to viewers' perceptions and responses, and to various American political situations. It might also be worth looking at whether the visual presentations of politicians in news magazines are equivalent with those in other visual media. If the findings of this study can be generalized to the other media, the potential influence of the differential visual representation would become more consequential.

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ANALYZING NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS:
ARE THE ARGUMENTS CONSISTENT?

David Boeyink
School of Journalism
Indiana University

ABSTRACT

Most research on newspaper editorials, especially political endorsements, focuses on the conclusions of the editorials rather than the content of the arguments. Newspapers can then be classified as liberal or conservative, Democratic or Republican, based on these positions.

However, an analysis of the editorial arguments from 13 newspapers on four national issues in 1987 (AIDS, Gary Hart, Robert Bork and Iran/Contra) shows that a majority of these newspapers are not consistently liberal or conservative.

Even newspapers which took similar positions on issues often used radically different arguments to support those positions. In some cases, the issues themselves -- not ideology -- seemed to dictate which ethical arguments were used, especially in the choice between consequentialism and normative principles. Finally, several newspapers offered a consistent perspective in arguments in ways that illuminated their editorial page philosophy more clearly than any classification as liberal or conservative, Democratic or Republican.

Newspaper Division
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David E. Boeyink
School of Journalism
Indiana University
Ernie Pyle Hall
Bloomington, IN 47405
(812) 855-9821

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Newspaper editorials have the power to challenge public opinion on racial segregation, stop environmental damage, set a public agenda on education, and even influence a Senate vote on the confirmation of a Supreme Court judge. In less dramatic ways, editorials daily express the values of newspapers on a variety of issues facing a community and the nation.

Yet as a potentially powerful voice in shaping the agenda and arguments on national and local issues, very little is known about the specific values expressed in the nation's editorial pages or the way these values are developed in response to specific issues.

Research on newspaper editorials has focused largely on the narrow issue of candidate endorsements. Of 53 research studies of newspaper editorials reviewed, more than half (29) focused on editorial endorsements. Although this research is valuable, it is limited in its ability to explore the nature of editorial values of newspapers for several reasons.[1]

1. The predominant interest of this research has not been on the editorials themselves, but on the effects of endorsements on voter behavior (17 studies) or the influence of chain ownership on endorsement choices (five studies). Only three of the studies examined the content of the editorial endorsements.[2]

2. The endorsement decision itself may have limited value in identifying the enduring values of the newspaper. Although newspapers traditionally endorse Republican presidential

candidates by a large majority, Byron St. Dizier found that newspapers endorsing a Republican for president often take positions espoused by the Democrats on key campaign issues.[3]

If endorsements are poor predictors of the positions of newspapers on major national policies, then research into editorial arguments is needed to understand more about the values and reasoning of newspaper editorials. Editorial writers themselves might agree: They believe that persuading readers of an opinion, analyzing issues and stimulating thought are far more critical than influencing the outcome of elections.[4] In short, a critical dimension of the editorial role is the reasoning lying behind the conclusions.

Some of the non-endorsement editorial research does look at the content of editorial opinions. However, most of these studies are limited to identifying the specific subject matter of editorials (e.g. which issues are covered in an editorial campaign) or classifying their form (e.g. argumentative or informative).[5] For example, David Myers discusses the nature of the campaign debate on foreign affairs with examples of arguments from campaign editorials.[6] Nonetheless, the key focus for Myers is showing how foreign affairs was not as critical as other issues, rather than systematically analyzing the arguments.

Several studies focus on editorial arguments, but only to point out their absence. For example, Kenneth Rystrom, following Clarke and Evans, noted the dearth of arguments on campaign issues in endorsement editorials.[7]

Editorial research comes closest to examining the content of editorial arguments in several studies on non-campaign issues.[8] Yet even here the tendency is to limit the analysis of the arguments to a single quantifiable variable, especially whether the editorial supports or opposes a particular position. Only rarely are the editorial arguments themselves a substantive part of the analysis.[9]

Purpose and Method

To understand the ability of an editorial to persuade, one must look at the reasoning behind editorial positions. Looking at the content of editorial arguments can expose a richness of argument that is hidden when the only variable is the choice of candidates. Moreover, these arguments can offer insight into the values of media institutions and the way those values are used in the shaping of opinions. A qualitative analysis of the editorials on four national issues in 13 newspapers during 1987 provides evidence for the value of this broadened research on newspaper editorials.

The 1988 presidential endorsement and editorials on four key issues in 1987 (AIDS, Gary Hart's withdrawal from the presidential race, Robert Bork's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court and the Iran/contra hearings) were solicited from 16 newspapers[10] randomly selected from a list of U.S. daily newspapers. Two newspapers were selected from each of eight circulation categories.[11] Two newspapers from each of the six largest circulation categories were represented in the final sample.[12] Only one newspaper in the two smallest circulation categories submitted editorials despite repeated attempts to include small dailies in the sample.

A total of 287 editorials were analyzed.[13] As few as five editorials came from the smallest newspaper, the Estherville (Ia.) Daily News, while The Atlanta Journal provided 52 editorials. With only one exception, all newspapers in the sample submitted at least one editorial on each of the four issues.

The selection of issues was based on several factors. National issues were needed to allow a comparison of arguments from newspapers scattered around the country. The issues also had to be prominent and controversial enough to provoke comment from most editorial pages. Finally, each of the issues selected has at least the potential to be placed in the context of the ongoing "liberal/conservative" debate. In recent years the media have been painted as liberal[14] or as tied to the conservative powerful elites in society.[15] In either case one could expect some ideological consistency -- liberal or conservative -- in editorial opinions. In the context of these issues, a conservative newspaper (one endorsing George Bush, President Reagan's successor) would be more likely to support Reagan's positions on national defense (support for Iran/contra), judicial philosophy (support for Robert Bork), and traditional sexual morality (criticism of Gary Hart's infidelity and the behavior of homosexuals spreading AIDS). A liberal position would take opposing views on each of the issues.

This study will explore whether newspapers are ideologically consistent in their positions. Beyond identifying the position of each newspaper on each issue, the goal of the analysis was to identify the key arguments used to support the editorial's position, especially the social, political and ethical values in the arguments. More critically, we want to explore the arguments behind those positions to see what relationship the reasoning has to the final position of the editorials. Are similar ideological positions supported by similar arguments? Do the arguments themselves help to explain any inconsistencies found? What factors in the editorial argument shape the reasoning process?[16]

Findings

Despite some consistency in editorial positions, this analysis of editorials from a small sample of newspapers offers insight into the use of editorial arguments that is hidden in the simplistic labeling of newspapers as "conservative" or "liberal," "Republican" or "Democratic."

1. A significant number of newspapers were ideologically consistent in their positions. Five of the 13 newspapers were either liberal or conservative in all their editorial positions.

2. However, the position of more than one-half of the newspapers on any issue could not be predicted based on either the presidential endorsement or stands on other major national issues.
3. Even when a number of newspapers agree on a specific issue, the arguments offered for those positions can be diverse and even contradictory.
4. The issues themselves, rather than any newspaper ideology, can sometimes set the agenda for the key editorial arguments, especially in the use of ethical values.
5. Thematic consistency can be found in a newspaper's editorials on a range of issues even when they appear to be ideologically inconsistent.

1. A MEASURE OF PREDICTABILITY

One would expect that an endorsement of George Bush, a Republican candidate who successfully painted Michael Dukakis as a "liberal," would be matched with "conservative" positions on the four national issues of 1987.[17] Likewise, a Dukakis endorsement might be expected to be linked with "liberal" positions on the same issues.[18]

In part, that expectation is supported by the newspapers in this sample. Two of the six newspapers endorsing Bush took "conservative" positions on all four issues. The Richmond News Leader and Chattanooga News-Free Press saw sexual morality at the core of the Gary Hart incident and AIDS. Both the Bork nomination and Iran/contra were seen by those papers as a choice between liberal and conservative ideologies: Bork represented a conservative judicial philosophy; at the heart of Iran/contra was the Communist threat in Central America.[19] Similarly, three of the five newspapers endorsing Dukakis[20] took clear "liberal" positions on all issues.[21]

Excluding the presidential endorsement,[22] the level of ideological consistency rises slightly, including a total of six newspapers that took clear, consistent ideological positions as conservatives or liberals on all four national issues.[23]

2. A MEASURE OF UNPREDICTABILITY

However, the remaining newspapers were less predictable. Four newspapers supporting the nomination of Bork saw AIDS as a public health issue (rather than a problem of personal morality) and were highly critical of North or Reagan for their roles in the Iran/contra scandal.[24] The Kansas City Times opposed the Bork nomination, criticized Oliver North, and saw AIDS as a public health issue. Yet the Times' editorials focused on Hart as an unfaithful candidate who "cannot seem to rise above personal peccadilloes, in this case womanizing."[25] The Daily Intelligencer of Doylestown, Pa., was consistent in its "liberalism," on all four issues--but still endorsed Bush.[26]

Yet even this brief review does not expose the level of diversity in positions taken. Several newspapers saw no problem in appealing to both the liberal and conservative arguments in shaping their positions. This was particularly true on AIDS and Gary Hart. The Chattanooga News-Free Press emphasized Hart's immorality but also extended that criticism to his political judgment.[27] The Detroit Free Press and The Atlanta Journal could focus on AIDS as an issue of public health, yet call for a "higher moral standard" or a balance between moral values and safe sex to help resolve the problem.[28] The Atlanta Journal was highly critical of Iran/contra, yet parceled out its judgment carefully, supporting the contras, but not the illegal diversion, and blaming Reagan for trading arms for hostages, but absolving him of the illegal diversion of funds.[29]

If endorsements--or even positions on key issues--are to be used as predictors of a newspaper's basic ideology or approach to all public issues, these examples of unpredictable outcomes and complex arguments serve as reminders of the peril that simplistic labeling carries.

3. COMMON POSITIONS, DIVERSE ARGUMENTS

But even where the positions taken were consistent, arguments supporting those positions were widely varied, and in some cases, even contradictory. Editorials with the same basic position on AIDS as a public health problem called on different arguments to make their case. The Minneapolis Star and Tribune put the issue in an international perspective; the Detroit Free

Press raised a constitutional issue over testing; The New York Times offered a pragmatic argument built on evidence of risk.[30]

Even narrower policy questions were rooted in varied arguments. The Beaumont Enterprise rejected mandatory testing because the controversy over testing diverted attention from attempts to control its spread; The New Castle News rejected testing because it was not justified without the possibility of a cure;[31] The Times Record of Brunswick, Me. rejected testing because it violated privacy and drove the carriers underground.[32]

In the case of editorials supporting Robert Bork, widely different claims about Bork's position lead to the same conclusion. The Detroit Free Press found his views troubling precisely because they were inconsistent; The New York Times declared that Bork's views were very consistent--and still unacceptable.[33]

In the editorials on the Iran/contra incident, all but two newspapers were united in their criticism of the actions of Oliver North and the Reagan administration. But the critics were divided in their definition of the problem. For many, the key problem was the lack of leadership in the White House: President Reagan was not in control or not even aware.[34] For others Iran/contra was a larger issue: an example of disregard for the rule of law.[35] Still other papers criticized Iran/contra because it distorted the proper functioning of government by creating a private, shadow government,[36] fostered an irresponsible foreign policy,[37] undermined the need for truth and public debate in a free society,[38] and threatened public trust in government.[39] Few, if any, of these arguments are contradictory. Yet each represents a different evaluation of the central problems at the root of the Iran/contra incident, differences that create distinctive arguments, shape specific judgments and affect the persuasiveness of the editorials.

The critical nature of the argument is also seen dramatically in the editorials supporting the nomination of Robert Bork. A majority of the editorials supporting Bork ignored the main arguments against his confirmation: that his views are out of the mainstream of legal and public opinion on civil rights and that he is a legal activist who scorns judicial precedent. Instead they shifted to the narrower--and more tenuous--argument that Senate confirmation should be circumscribed to exclude political philosophy: barring incompetency, President Reagan's right to name justices should not be obstructed.[40]

Finally, newspapers which shared the same general perspective on issues varied significantly in their use of information. The amount of documentary evidence correlated with the specificity of proposed solutions. Editorials using only generalized assertions of the threat of AIDS uniformly issued general appeals for education.[41] But editorials with more detailed information on AIDS (its costs, spread, relation to drug use) also offered more specific remedies for halting the spread, including assessments of the complicated issues of testing.[42] In the most extreme example, The New York Times used precise data and logic to recommend a clear, specific policy on testing,[43] while The Kansas City Times cited the lack of data to express confusion over the problem and uncertainty over policy.[44]

Perhaps this point is too obvious to require much argument. Every issue--and certainly the complex controversies chosen for this survey--offers a range of potential arguments to be marshalled in support of similar positions. But those arguments are not all of equal value in persuading others. Nor are all of these arguments capable of being easily categorized as liberal or conservative: the threat to human life in the spread of AIDS, the circumventing of a rule of law in Iran/contra, even Gary Hart's treatment of women (infidelity or sexism?). As we noted above, some newspapers adopted both sides of arguments on the liberal/conservative divide on AIDS and Gary Hart. If the search for ideological commitment is valuable, at least it should be carried out at the level of argument, not simply by identifying the final position.

4. ISSUE-SPECIFIC ETHICS

The importance of investigating editorial arguments may be even clearer in examining the role of ethical values in editorial positions. Because editorials frequently prescribe behavior, they are intrinsically ethical, arguing for what ought to be done. Ethical values thus play a pivotal role in these editorials, whether explicit or unstated.[45]

Yet in these editorials, the nature of the ethical argument was often set by the issue itself. The shift from consequentialism to principles to character, while perhaps problematic in theory, appears to be a common strategy in matching issues and ethical values. For example, a concern for the consequences of the spread of AIDS forms a common ethical framework for nearly all the editorial positions on AIDS. Only the most ideologically conservative newspapers rejected that underlying ethical perspective. At the same time, when the focus shifted to AIDS testing, concerns over the right to privacy[46] and discrimination[47] became pivotal parts of the arguments limiting testing.

Interestingly, the newspapers which were most concerned about the spread of AIDS (a consequentialist ethical perspective) were least likely to use consequentialist arguments to address the problem of Iran/contra. The most often-cited ethical problem was lying, either by Oliver North or President Reagan. Editorials also discussed the hearings in the context of other value choices (justice,[48] liberty,[49] or openness[50]). But the appeal was nearly always to principles, not consequences. When the ends of U.S. foreign policy are raised, the Reagan administration is criticized for its unethical means.[51]

Conversely, the newspapers which focused not on consequences of AIDS, but on standards of moral behavior, marshalled support for Reagan based on a patently consequentialist argument: Lying and disregard for the law are justified in the face of the threat of communism and to save the lives of hostages.[52]

Even the narrowly focused Hart debate turned largely on the interpretation given to character: was it principally an issue of personal morality or a larger question of bad judgment? At one end of the spectrum, editorials argued that Hart's character flaw was a pattern of marital infidelity.[53] At the other end, the character problem exemplified in Hart's affair with Donna Rice was a broader issue of discipline and poor judgment.[54] Seldom did an editorial position push the issue beyond character to the issue of Hart's policies, and then only with the clear understanding that character was still the principal issue.[55]

This phenomenon of matching issues and ethical principles has been given scant attention in ethics, even less in journalism ethics, and virtually none in editorial research. Attempts to draw the line between abstract theories of ethics (utilitarianism, formalism, situation ethics) are not irrelevant. Nor are the dispositions of editorial writers to one of those systems. Cornelius Pratt and Gerald McLaughlin found a relationship between ethical dispositions of editorial writers (formalism, situation ethics, or utilitarianism) and their editorial positions.[56] At the same time, the evidence from this study suggests that predicting a newspaper's ethical framework based on the editorials on a single issue would be risky at best.

Finally, it must now be clear that characterizing the values of these newspapers in any simplistic way--as utilitarian or formalist, as Republican or Democratic, as conservative or liberal--is a flawed strategy. At times this bipolar model of classifying issues and candidates has been used in editorial research, most commonly by equating "liberal" with "Democratic" and "conservative" with "Republican."[57] As powerful ideological symbols, these labels do have meaning which, in the absence of other factors, can be clues to political behavior.[58]

However, a study by Pamela Conover and Stanley Feldman has argued that the meaning of liberal and conservative is frequently not issue-specific. Indeed, people often report being unable to identify positions on issues as either liberal or conservative.[59] Even the predictive value of political terms such as Republican or Democrat is being questioned. A study by The Times Mirror Company shows "that the conventional way of defining our politics--in terms such as liberal and conservative, Republican, Democrat and independent--bears little relation to the true, diverse nature of the electorate."[60] The Times Mirror study found 11 distinct groups in the electorate, divided in their ethical and political attitudes along nine basic values and orientations: religious faith, tolerance, social justice, militant anti-communism, alienation, American exceptionalism, financial pressure, attitudes toward government, and attitudes toward business corporations.[61] Positions on issues within those groups were far more predictable than any bipolar classification.

The same may hold true for newspaper editorial pages. Such a framework could, for example, explain the differences among "conservative" newspapers, depending on whether they represented "Moralists" (driven by moral issues and militant anti-communism) or "Enterprisers" (driven by free enterprise economic concerns). It may also explain why support for programs to control AIDS is broadly based, yet differences appear in policies on testing.[62]

While the evidence here cannot verify such correlations with the Times Mirror study, what is suggested is a similar complexity of underlying views among editorial pages. In general, editorial page editors are less ideological than one might expect, at least in any narrow framework of "Republican/Democratic" or "liberal/conservative".[63]

Consistency in perspective

At the same time, a number of the newspapers exemplified a pattern of argument across issues which allowed the reader to see the newspaper's perspective as consistent, even if not totally predictable according to commonly used labels.

The Detroit Free Press used language of crisis in all the issues: AIDS was likened to the plague; Iran/contra presented a constitutional crisis; Hart's downfall was symptomatic of a crisis in leadership; Bork's ideology was "dangerous."[64] The Free Press was also among the most consistent in the use of consequential reasoning, whether it was avoiding counterproductive measures in AIDS or worrying about the consequences of expecting political candidates to be saints.[65] These thematic elements had clear implications for the positions taken by the Free Press, particularly in heightening the urgency of decisive action on AIDS.[66]

By contrast, The Atlanta Journal developed positions on issues more clearly based in the conflict of values. For example, the Journal supported aid to the contras, but not in defiance of the law; looked for a balance in AIDS policy "between public and individual rights and between the responsibilities of Washington and the states," and saw Bork as a good candidate in part because his presence would balance the values of liberty and equality on the Supreme Court.[67]

The recognition of explicit conflicts among values also characterized the editorials of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune and Beaumont Enterprise. On the question of immunity for witnesses in the Iran/contra hearings, both saw the choice as a conflict between truth (the need for information about what happened) and justice (for those who may have violated the law).[68]

A different kind of theme characterized the approach of the Brunswick Times-Record. The Times-Record was one of the few newspapers to appeal to historical precedents in its arguments.[69]

Finally, one of the most interesting perspectives came from the Beaumont Enterprise. In several cases, the loyalty of the Beaumont Enterprise seemed to be to the process of solving problems, rather than specific policies. Whatever furthered that process of openness, information and public debate (avoiding controversy over AIDS testing, finding a replacement for Bork quickly, compelling North's testimony and opposing pardons, or getting Hart out of the race) was right.[70]

Identifying these common themes does not promise predictable conclusions. Issues are often too complex for that. But each thread woven through a newspaper's approach helps to illuminate its perspective. More critically, few of these perspectives could be read out of an ideological framework that divided the world--or individual newspapers--neatly into camps of liberals and conservatives.

NOTES

[1] All but one of these studies was conducted after 1964. Two-thirds were completed after 1979. While no claim is made for the inclusiveness of this list, every study on editorials found in a standard literature search was included. A complete list of the studies can be obtained from the author.

[2] One of these illustrated dramatically the critical need for a more careful analysis of arguments in editorial endorsements. Peter Clarke and Susan H. Evans found that half of all the endorsements in their study were only "blurbs," brief recommendations without argument or data to support them. Despite that 1983 finding, studies of the effects of editorial endorsements on voters have never made the distinction between reasoned endorsements and blurb endorsements a critical variable. "Muted Voices on the Editorial Page," Covering Campaigns: Journalism in Congressional Elections, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1983, p. 75. A second study measured the effect of the clarity of the message (an unambiguous endorsement) on voter awareness. Roger A. Gafke and David A. Leuthold, "Why Some Editorial Endorsements are More Persuasive than Others," ANPA News Research Report No. 37, Washington, D.C.: ANPA, 1982, pp. 5-9. Kenneth Rystrom found that endorsement editorials of major California newspapers focused on personalities, campaign strategy and horse-race speculation, rather than candidates'

positions on issues. Kenneth Rystrom, "Newspapers Lag on Issues," The Masthead, 33:4, Winter 1981, pp. 28-30.

[3] Byron St. Dizier, "Republican Endorsements, Democratic Positions: An Editorial Page Contradiction," Journalism Quarterly 63, Autumn, 1986, pp. 581-586. See also Kenneth Rystrom, "The Impact of Newspaper Endorsements," Newspaper Research Journal 7:2, Winter 1986, pp. 19-28.

[4] Fewer than 1 percent of all editorial writers themselves believe influencing the outcome of elections--an activity which consumes the attention of many editorial boards only once every two or four years--is an important objective. Far more central to the editorial writer's role is persuading or convincing readers of an opinion (41.7 percent); informing, explaining and analyzing an issue (37.2 percent), and stimulating thought or debate (29.7 percent). G. Cleveland Wilhoit and Dan G. Drew, "Profile of the North American Editorial Writer, 1971-79," The Masthead 31:4, Winter 1979/80, p. 12.

[5] For example, see Guido H. Stempel III, "Types and Topics of Editorials in U.S. Dailies," Newspaper Research Journal, prototype issue, April 1979, pp. 3-6, and David S. Myers, "Editorials on the Economy in the 1980 Presidential Campaign," Journalism Quarterly, 59:2, Autumn 1982, pp. 414-419.

[6] Myers, "Editorials and Foreign Affairs in Recent Presidential Campaigns," Journalism Quarterly, 59, Winter, 1982, pp. 541-547.

[7] Rystrom, "Newspapers Lag on Issues," pp. 28-29.

[8] For example, see Neil J. Kressel, "Elite Editorial Favorability and American Public Opinion: A Case Study of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," Psychological Reports, 61, 1987, 303-313.

[9] Alongside her quantitative analysis, Victoria Smith uses the arguments of editorials in Minnesota dailies to show how press reaction to suppression differed depending on whether the editorial was defending freedom in the abstract or judging the suppression of a group or individual. "Newspapers and Freedom of Expression: Minnesota Press Reaction to Suppression During the World War I Era." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Minnesota, December, 1985. Three additional studies on broadcasting deregulation, political changes in Hong Kong and the Boer War focused principally on the editorial content by classifying arguments and editorial positions. Alf Pratte and Gordon Whiting, "What Newspaper Editorials Have Said About Deregulation of Broadcasting," Journalism Quarterly, 63, Autumn 1986, pp. 497-502; Joseph Man Chan and Chin-Chuan Lee, "Shifting Journalistic Paradigms: Editorial Stance and Political Transition in Hong Kong," The China Quarterly 117 (March 1989), pp. 97-117; Marvin Olasky, "Social Darwinism on the Editorial Page: American Newspapers and the Boer War." 65:2, Summer 1988, pp. 420-424. See also Douglas J. Kocher, "Temporary Vilification: The Chicago Press and Chester Arthur, 1881," Journalism History, 9:2, Summer 1982, pp. 53-55, 60; Patricia Ann Williams, "The New York Times and the Washington Post's Editorials on Rhodesia," unpublished master's thesis, Indiana University, 1981; and Dennis Hale,

"Editorial Coverage of Reagan Supreme Court Nominees," unpublished manuscript, pp. 1-21.

[10] The newspapers in the sample are The New York Times, Detroit Free Press, The Kansas City Times, Minneapolis Star and Tribune, The Atlanta Journal, The Richmond (Va.) News Leader, Beaumont (Texas) Enterprise, Chattanooga News-Free Press, The Daily Intelligencer (Doylestown, Pa.), The Daily Times-News (Burlington, N.C.), New Castle (Pa.) News, The Times Record (Brunswick, Me.), and Estherville (Ia.) Daily News.

[11] Circulation categories were 5,000 and below, 5,001-10,000, 10,001-25,000, 25,001-50,000, 50,001-100,000, 100,001-250,000, 250,001-500,000, and greater than 500,000.

[12] Newspapers within each circulation category were replaced if they were unable to furnish editorials or the editorials were not available from a computer database. In addition, some of the smaller newspapers had not written editorials on the issues selected for the study. Newspapers added to the sample after the initial selection were also chosen randomly within each circulation category.

[13] In two cases, columns by the editorial page editor (The Richmond News-Leader) or the publisher (Detroit Free Press) were included. These columns not only fit the overall position taken by the newspapers' editorials, but provide arguments critical to understanding the newspaper's position.

[14] S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman, "Media and Business Elites," Public Opinion (October/November 1981): 42-46, 59-60; L.

Brent Bozell III and Brent H. Baker, eds., And That's The Way It Is(n't), Alexandria, Va.: Media Research Center, 1990.

[15] J. Herbert Altschull, Agents of Power: The Role of the News Media in Human Affairs, New York: Longman, 1984; Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media, New York: Pantheon, 1988.

[16] In this context, all editorials on the same issue from the same newspaper were treated as a unit. This assumes an editorial page will develop a consistent set of arguments for a position over a number of editorials during the year. While this approach has risks (editorials are not always consistent; positions may change with new evidence), the advantage is getting a fuller picture of the range of arguments undergirding a newspaper's position.

[17] AIDS is a reflection of immoral behavior; Gary Hart is unfit for office because of his infidelity; The conservative Robert Bork should be confirmed; Oliver North was justified in his efforts to aid the contras.

[18] AIDS is a public health issue; Hart's problem is judgment, not immorality; Bork's views undermine civil rights; North wrongly engaged in illegal and unethical behavior.

[19] The Richmond News Leader, March 18, May 8, July 7 and 24; Chattanooga News-Free Press, May 8, June 2, July 6, Sept. 16, Nov. 1 and 11.

[20] The New York Times, Detroit Free Press, and Minneapolis Star and Tribune.

[21] The New York Times, May 5, Oct. 5 and 11, Nov. 19 and 22; Detroit Free Press, May 6 and 24, June 5, July 9, and Oct. 1; Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Jan. 9, May 6, July 17, and Sept. 20.

[22] Eliminating the endorsement from the analysis might be justified in light of evidence that the procedure for presidential endorsements differs at many newspapers from daily decisions on editorial positions. The presidential endorsement process is more structured and often involves direct input from other newspaper managers, especially the publisher. See Clarke and Evans, p. 79. Also, two newspapers in the sample did not endorse.

[23] In addition to those listed above, The Daily Intelligencer took consistently "liberal" positions on all issues.

[24] The Atlanta Journal, July 5 and Nov. 20; Beaumont Enterprise, June 1, Oct. 6, and two undated editorials; The Daily Times-News (Burlington, N.C.), Aug. 3 and 5, and Oct. 20; New Castle (Pa.) News.

[25] The Kansas City Times, May 9.

[26] The Daily Intelligencer, March 6, May 8 and 18, July 11, and Oct. 7. The Daily Intelligencer is a perfect example of a phenomenon identified in the research of Byron St. Dizier. Dizier found that newspapers regularly endorsed Republican presidential candidates, but took Democratic positions on the campaign issues. St. Dizier, op.cit.

[27] Chattanooga News-Free Press, Aug. 24 and Dec. 16.

[28] Detroit Free Press, May 24; The Atlanta Journal, June 3.

[29] The Atlanta Journal, May 19 and July 16.

[30] The New York Times, Feb. 4 and June 15; Detroit Free Press, March 23; Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Nov. 2.

[31] The New Castle News, May 9.

[32] Beaumont Enterprise, June 1; The Times Record, Feb. 5.

[33] The New York Times, Oct. 5; Detroit Free Press, Oct. 5.

[34] The Kansas City Times, Feb. 27; The Daily Intelligencer of Doylestown, Pa., March 6; The Daily Times-News of Burlington, N.C., Aug. 5; the Estherville (Ia.) Daily News, n.d.

[35] The Times Record of Brunswick, Me., July 14; The Atlanta Journal, Nov. 20; Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Aug. 14; and Detroit Free Press., July 9.

[36] The New York Times, July 12; Minneapolis Star and Tribune, July 9.

[37] The Detroit Free Press., July 15; New Castle (Pa.) News, and Estherville (Ia.) Daily News, n.d.

[38] Beaumont Enterprise, Nov. 25; New Castle (Pa.) News.

[39] The New York Times, Nov. 22; Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Aug. 14.

[40] The clearest statement of that position came from the Beaumont Enterprise, asserting that Bork's opponents should "base their criticism solely on his legal fitness for the job," n.d. See also The Daily Times-News, n.d. The Atlanta Journal also focused on Bork's judicial qualifications. And although concluding Bork was not "ultraliberal" or "extremist," it never

deals with these charges in detail, concluding that "President Reagan certainly has the right to nominate well-qualified judicial conservatives." July 5. Only the most consistently conservative newspapers, the Chattanooga News-Free Press (Sept. 16) and The Richmond News-Leader (Oct. 2) defend Bork's positions vigorously.

[41] The Daily Intelligencer of Doylestown, Pa., June 11; The Kansas City Times, July 11 and Sept. 11; and The Daily Times-News of Burlington, N.C., Aug. 3.

[42] The New York Times, Feb. 4, Oct. 5, Nov. 19; Minneapolis Star and Tribune, March 1, Oct. 8, and Nov. 2; Detroit Free Press, June 5 and 27; and The Atlanta Journal, Aug. 24 and Nov. 2, are four examples from this sample.

[43] The New York Times, Nov. 30.

[44] The Kansas City Times, June 11.

[45] The pivotal role of ethical values can be seen most starkly in the Chattanooga News-Free Press and The Richmond News Leader. While the two papers differed radically in their assessment of the health threat of AIDS (The News-Free Press called it the "next Black Death"; the News Leader saw little need for heterosexuals to be concerned), their call for the abandoning of drug use and homosexuality is identical because the solution is moral conduct, not better public health policy. The Richmond News Leader, March 18 and Aug. 7; Chattanooga News-Free Press, June 2 and Aug. 20.

[46] The Detroit Free Press, March 23.

[47] The New York Times, Sept. 5.

[48] Minneapolis Star and Tribune, June 11; and Beaumont Enterprise, June 6.

[49] The Times Record of Brunswick, Me., July 14.

[50] New Castle (Pa.) News, March 25.

[51] The New York Times, Nov. 19; Minneapolis Star and Tribune, May 10; and The Times Record of Brunswick, Me., July 14.

[52] The Richmond News Leader, July 17. The News-Free Press is more critical of lying and disregard for the law, but still concludes that these mistakes "were made in honest efforts to further a sound cause in the best interests of the United States and all Americans." Chattanooga News-Free Press, July 6 and 16.

[53] The Kansas City Times, May 9.

[54] The New York Times, May 5; The Daily Intelligencer, of Doylestown, Pa., May 8.

[55] The New Castle News (Aug. 26) and Beaumont Enterprise (Dec. 16) criticized Hart's reentry into the race because the unanswered questions about his character would detract from debates over important issues, such as the deficit. The Chattanooga News-Free Press (Dec. 16) castigated Hart's campaign, both for his character and his policies.

[56] Cornelius Pratt and Gerald McLaughlin, "Ethical Dimensions of Nigerian Journalists and Their Newspapers," Journal of Mass Media Ethics 5:1, 1990, pp. 30-44.

[57] Robert S. Erikson, "The Influence of Newspaper Endorsements in Presidential Elections: The Case of 1964,"

American Journal of Political Science 20,2 (May 1976): 207-233; Kenneth Rystrom, "Apparent Impact of Endorsements By Group and Independent Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly (64: 2 and 3): 449-453, 532 (Summer-Autumn 1987); Byron St. Dizier, "Editorial Page Editors and Endorsements: Chain-owned vs. Independent Newspapers. Newspaper Research Journal, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Fall 1986): pp. 63-68.

[58] Pamela Conover and Stanley Feldman, "The Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications," American Journal of Political Science 25:4 (November 1981): 621, 642.

[59] Ibid., p. 642.

[60] Norman Ornstein, Andrew Kohut, and Larry McCarthy. "Introduction," The People, the Press, and Politics. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1988.

[61] Ibid., pp. 1, 5, 8, and 95.

[62] Support for increasing budgets for AIDS research was high among every constituency in the Times Mirror study. But the same groups were divided when faced with proposals for drug testing. They also had widely divergent beliefs about homosexuals and AIDS as a punishment for immoral behavior. Ibid., pp. 37-39.

[63] That same kind of non-ideological approach was found in Hong Kong newspapers responding to the eventual takeover by the Chinese government. Only the most conservative papers clung to an ideological perspective, rather than a pragmatic approach. Chan and Lee, op.cit.

[64] Detroit Free Press, May 8 and 24, July 9 and 25, and Oct.

1.

[65] Detroit Free Press, May 6, June 5, and Oct. 17.

[66] Detroit Free Press, June 5.

[67] The Atlanta Journal, June 3, July 5 and Nov. 20.

[68] Minneapolis Star and Tribune, June 11; Beaumont Enterprise, June 6 and Nov. 25.

[69] The nomination of Abe Fortas for Chief Justice demonstrated the political character of past nominations; U.S. support for Somoza was evidence of complicity in the anti-democratic history of Nicaragua. Times-Record, Feb. 26 and July 15.

[70] Beaumont Enterprise, June 1, Oct. 7 and 13, Nov. 25, and Dec. 16; The New Castle (Pa.) News was similar in its emphasis on the need for information and public debate to reach good decisions.

Lynch-Paley, Dianne
Covering the Capitol:
Is Gender an Issue?

Covering the Capitol: Is Gender An Issue?

"Cronyism is the curse of journalism." -- Walter Lippmann

"A certified idiot working for the New York Times can get his or her calls returned any time, any place. And it's hard for a reporter to have prestige in this town unless he/she is published at a prestigious publication."

-- Washington political reporter in response to survey question

When representatives of the American colonies gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 to establish a new and democratic government, they held their meetings in secret. It was an inauspicious beginning for a government that, even in its infancy, decried official secrecy and committed itself to the institution of a free press. Later that year, Thomas Jefferson was to remark that, given a choice between a "government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter."[1] But political rhetoric did not keep the Founding Fathers in 1792 from establishing the doctrine of Executive Privilege, the first and one of the most enduring mechanisms by which the president could withhold information from the public.

Since those early days, the tug-of-war between open disclosure and political self-preservation has spawned such innovations as the party press, the presidential press conference, the National Press Club, public information officers, and the "backgrounder" (followed by the "deep backgrounder" and the "deep, deep backgrounder"). The status of the source-reporter adversarial relationship remains a matter of contention: "News reporting is too important to be left to news reporters alone, so politicians try to help," reporter William Small once observed. "There is permanent tension; what both call an adversary relationship . . . . If there is a law in press-government relations, it is that information is provided in reverse proportion to the amount of controversy involved. . . . Where that (adversarial relationship) does not exist, where they are happy with each other, either the press or the politician is not doing its job." [2] In a critical look at the relationships between the Senate and the thousand-plus members of the Senate press galleries, Donald Matthews found too often that adversity had deteriorated into mutual accommodation. "Senator-reporter 'back-scratching' has a decided influence on Capitol Hill news," he wrote. "The national news reporters' best sources receive a better press than their actions merit . . . Reporters admit to not writing stories concerning senators who took mid-session Florida vacations, had brushes with traffic policemen, were drunk and disorderly at Washington parties . . . all in an effort not to embarrass a reliable source. Let the reader beware." [3]

Political news depends as much upon source-reporter relationships, cronyism, the ubiquitous press release and the phenomenon of pack journalism as it does upon the activities of government. The machinations of a democracy in action -- still struggling to adhere to the tenets and ideals of its Bill of Rights -- comprise a confused, chaotic process, one that bestows upon the political reporter the responsibility -- and the right -- to bring his or her own brand of order to the confusion. It is the reporter's role to sift and winnow, to cull from the chaos the "newsworthy" events. Journalists' daily decisions are founded in their own news judgment, an unreliable facilitiy comprised of their own experiences and their knowledge about the activities of their peers, i.e., their conclusion that, indeed, the wire services are (or are not) going to pick up a given story. Add to this complex formula the impact of the mechanical pressures of daily deadlines, and it comes as little surprise that the definition of "news" -- and a comprehensive understanding of the processes that produce it -- have stumped journalism scholars for so long: What is news today may -- or may not -- be considered news tomorrow, depending upon what else is happening, who owes whom a favor, and whether or not Cable News Network happens to have had a reporter on the scene.

In an effort to bring logic and order to the maelstrom of daily newswork, researchers have suggested various bases for reporter-source relationships and for the selection of news. Nimmo proposes that reporters and public information officers can be categorized into various typologies and that these are useful in predicting the nature of the interactions that will occur between the two.[4] Dyer and Nayman suggest that a shared culture facilitates source-reporter interactions and cooperation; Fico concludes that a government official's approach to his job dictates to a large degree his use or avoidance of the press, and Miller found that a source's knowledge, professional influence an dpersonal style determine how often he makes the papers.[5] In short, reporters and their relationships -- both with their sources and with one another -- have been the subject of intensive scholarly investigation. But at least one issue has yet to be considered: gender as a variable in the formula that produces source-reporter and reporter-peer relationships.

This study examines the literature on source-reporter interactions, as well as the current status of women in the media marketplace and the perceptions of women who hold Congressional press passes to address the following questions:

1. Does gender affect source-reporter relationships for women reporters, and if so, how? Is gender a variable in the newswork formula?
2. Does a reporter's sex determine to any significant degree her professional status, relationships with peers, or access to professional contacts and sources?
3. Research, as well as popular biography, has established that reporters consider the after-work social hour an essential part of their newsgathering routines. Does gender inhibit or promote associations and interactions that comprise an important aspect of the newswork process?

4. How do women political reporters perceive the impact of gender on their daily activities, professional status, and access to sources?

The work addresses four distinct but interrelated topics: a discussion of the status of women in the press; communication theory on source-reporter relationships; what are referred to here as "professional issues," i.e., practices that include pack journalism, cronyism, and the reporting pool; and survey research that measures women's perceptions about many of these issues.

Women in the Media: How Far Have They Come?

Since the 1960s

By 1960, 38,305 women -- 37.2 percent of the total -- were reporters and editors.[6] The impact of the burgeoning women's movement was felt in the nation's newsrooms as well as in its classrooms and executive boardrooms: In March of 1970, feminists staged a sit-in at the Ladies Home Journal to protest its continued portrayal of American women as happy homemakers -- exclusively. That week, women employees at Newsweek filed a complaint with the Equal Opportunities Commission charging employment discrimination; women, they argued, were restricted to positions in the research department while men held a monopoly on the editing and reporting slots. [7] As the women's movement grew, feminist publications emerged. Newspapers abolished the "women's page" and replaced it with lifestyle sections.

Despite these limited gains, women continued to work for less and to receive fewer promotions as compared with their male counterparts. A report in The Matrix confirmed the problem: "In spite of laws against discrimination, some employers frankly tell their women employees that they cannot expect to make as much as men. Many women feel that they would be in serious trouble with their bosses if they openly insisted on equal pay for equal work." [8] In 1978, there were four male reporters for every female reporter; women worked in the least prestigious assignments, and earned less than their male counterparts. In addition, women found that the male-dominated power circles of the city were often closed to them:

> After her first year in the capital, an experienced newspaper reporter claims, "Washington is the most sexist place I've ever lived." When covering the government, says a reporter for a specialized newspaper, "There's the 'good 'ol boy network,' and if you aren't a boy you don't get in. There just aren't enough women in high places out there to keep the tips flowing." Some women find certain beats particularly uncongenial. "Labor is very male-dominated, with traditional macho attitudes. Covering finances, you're not taken as seriously." Women working for prestige operations report fewer problems. "They identify you with your organization, not your gender." [9]

Trends in the workplace were mirrored by trends in the classroom. In 1977, for the first time in American history, the percentage of women enrolled in the nation's journalism schools surpassed that of men. In 1978, it reached 53.1 percent; three years later, 61.5 percent of the 14,274 persons receiving journalism degrees were women.[10] The continuing preponderance of women in journalism programs has prompted journalism scholars Maureen Beasley and Kathryn Theus to suggest that newswork may be becoming a "pink-collar ghetto":

> Journalism and related communications fields may become "pink-collar ghettos" in which salaries and status are lowered in relation to other major professions. Female-dominated fields such as teaching, social work, nursing and librarianship traditionally have been lower-income professions. Although salaries in journalism-related fields (some of which already are noted for low pay) may not decline, there should be concern that they will not rise as they might if these fields remained predominantly male.[11]

Communication Theory: Reporter-Source Relationships

Communication research on reporter-source relationships in the political arena can be categorized into three topics: 1) the reporters themselves; 2) the impact of mechanical pressures, i.e., deadline, space constraints, etc., on reporters' selection and use of sources; 3) and theories about the nature and structure of reporter-source relationships.

The Reporters

In 1937, Leo Rosten published his seminal examination of Washington correspondents, an exhaustive investigation of the capital city's elite press corps. Based on surveys and interviews with 127 journalists, the work discusses the function, the technqiues and the composition of the press corps, and their relationship to the news, to their sources, to their employers and to society. Although Rosten included such biographical detail as birthplace, education, college, number of siblings, religious background, parental income, paternal occupation and political identification, and marital status, he failed to address the issue of gender. Of the 127 reporters included in the study, five were women: Ruby Black, correspondent to eight metropolitan newspapers; Ruth Finney of the Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance; Genevieve Forbes Herrick of the North American Newspaper Alliance; Mary Hornaday of the Christian Science Monitor; and Marguerite Young of the New York Daily Worker. Unfortunately, Rosten did not analyze the responses of women as a subgroup of the whole; there is no way to determine whether their biographical, professional or personal histories differed from those of their male counterparts.

Not surprisingly, Rosten found that 76.3 percent of the Washington reporters were raised in middle-class, white-collar families. More than half of those surveyed were between 30 and 40 years old and about 83 percent had been raised in cities with populations less than 100,000. The majority were married with children; all of the five women were married to newspaper reporters.

Rosten's work is valuable as a starting point, as an historical basis for comparison. It is not of use, however, in terms of the impact of gender on political reporting; in keeping with the times, Rosten did not consider the issue important enough to merit consideration.

Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman's descriptive analysis of American journalists provides more valuable information regarding gender differentiation. Social awareness of sexism in the 1960s and 1970s undoubtedly prompted the authors in 1976 to pay particular attention to disparity in wages and promotion by gender; their findings, while not surprising, lend credence to the question of gender's impact on news sources/reporter-peer relationships, especially to the extent that those relationships can be expected to be influenced by status differences. In addition, gender data contributes significantly to Johnstone et al.'s conclusions about the social orientation of American journalists: they were predominantly white, Anglo-saxon male Protestants of middle-class backgrounds -- prototypes, if you will, of the American status quo. The implications for source-reporter/professional peer relationships seem apparent: members of a homogeneous, relatively high-status peer group can be expected to view with suspicion associates who deviate from the norm. Within this professional framework, women and minorities would, by definition, be considered suspect. In a professional culture dependent upon rigidly enforced rules of social interaction, such second-class status could be expected to have a negative impact on the professional success of the "out" group. In fact, Johnstone et al. found that "the most startling finding to emerge from this analysis is the importance of sex as a determinant of earnings in news-media journalism."[13]

That institutional sexism survived -- even flourished -- into the 1980s. In 1981, Stephen Hess found that the ratio of men to women in the Washington media equalled that of the national norm in 1971; in simpler terms, the hiring of female reporters in Washington lagged behind the rest of the United States by 10 years.[14] Women reporters were younger, employed at the least prestigious places and were the least well-paid of their peer group.[15]

Women reporters as a group were the youngest of Washington journalists: 84 percent were under forty years of age. Implicit in this characteristic were two distinct -- and negative -- ramifications: negative peer appraisal and less likelihood of prestigious assignment. "The younger the reporter, the more likely he is to have sympathy for the left of center," remarked an older, well-established male reporter.[16] In addition, Hess found that, while younger reporters did not work harder or longer hours than their older peers, they were given the least interesting work to do:

> (Younger reporters) write lots of little stories (an average of almost nine a week, nearly lthree more than the average produced by reporters in their forties); of all age groups, they spend the most time on stories that do not pan out, have the least opportunity to travel (nearly half of them did not leave Washington on assignment in the past year), have the highest number of disagreements with their editors (and a greater ratio of them about story requests from the home office) and they rate their jobs as the least satisfying.[17]

Eight years later, studies sponsored by the Gannett Foundation, the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, and Women in Communications Inc. concluded that nothing much had changed. A one-day conference, "Women, Men and the Media," was convened in 1989 to focus attention on how women were hired, promoted and portrayed by the media. Statistics reported at that conference suggested that women had made few gains in their efforts to match their male colleagues in terms of salary, promotion and management positions, despite the fact that nearly two-thirds of all journalism students were women. "Women begin their climb up the ladder in sufficient numbers, but many forces combine to knock them off," the report observed. Women continued to face biases in salaries and promotions and were segregated into dead-end jobs where they functioned as support staff rather than decision makers.[18]

Jean Gaddy Wilson, executive director of New Directions for News at the University of Missouri, reported the findings of an ongoing study, "Taking Stock: Women in the Media Before the 21st Century." Gaddy Wilson found, for example, that:

* Between 1984 and 1989, the nation's media paid a female employee 64 cents for every male employee's $1.
*Between 1984 and 1989, only 25 percent of those climbing the ladder to higher jobs were women.
* Between 1984 and 1989, the media continued to deny women access to the most powerful jobs, especially in the major media centers on the East and West Coasts. [19]

In addition, researchers at the conference reported that, in 1989:

* A woman boss earned significantly less than a man in the same job at the same size newspaper, television or radio station with the same years of experience, supervising the same number of employees.

* The only place where men and women earned equitable salaries was at the lowest rung of the media ladder: entry-level jobs. With every year of employment and with every step up the ladder, women were falling further behind in salary.

* Only 6 percent of top media bosses were female. "Men choose the messages, men determine what is news and what is entertainment. The messages the American people receive pass through a male filter."[20]

* Women held 25 percent of mid-management jobs and outnumber men in only two places in the media: as beginning reporters and on advertising sales staffs.

* In newspapers, women dominated only one department: advertising, which was 60 percent female.

* The best places for women to work were the Middle West, far from the media power centers on the East and West coasts.

* A study conducted in March, 1989, concluded that only 27 percent of bylines on the front pages were female; 24 percent of photographs included women (and then they were usually in group shots with spouses and/or children); 11 percent of persons quoted on the front page were women. These numbers approximated those reported in 1985 by the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund; four years had brought little progress.[21]

Despite the overwhelming majority of women in the nation's journalism schools, despite decades of experience and increasing recognition of the disparities by gender, women in 1989 continued to work for the least prestigious publications, to cover the least prestigious beats, and to hold the least prestigious positions at the nation's newspapers -- conditions that have important implications for a woman's access to key sources and important newsmakers.Couple youth with the "wrong" gender identity, and it would appear that the young woman in the Washington press corps faces nearly insurmountable odds in her efforts to establish the source and peer relationships upon which job success depends.

Which Sources?

An effort to understand source-reporter communication must include a discussion of the mechanical pressures journalists must tolerate and the impact of those pressures on the nature of sources they tend to pursue. Although many studies address these issues -- either directly or by implication -- one in particular merits extensive consideration here.

In Reporters and Officials: The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking, Leon Sigal describes in detail the "consensus formation" process that facilitates the common efforts of reporters and sources to bring order and certainty to newsgathering in the chaos of the political arena. This consensus process is dependent upon cultural variables that include shared values, role conceptions, and newswork routines; all of these variables -- but particularly the first two -- are subject to status bias (perceptions of another's status may, in part, shape conceptions about the degree of shared culture and role identification). If Sigal is correct in his analysis, then the consensus ritual by which sources and reporters facilitate the newswork process -- presumably to their mutual advantage -- may be very much affected by the gender variable.

Sigal's central argument is that time constraints and the complexity of government require sources to abdicate the responsibility of news definition to their sources, that the mechanistic demands of their profession induce reporters to focus on guaranteed-news events such as press conferences and presidential speeches. In so doing, journalists allow sources to become a self-selected subgroup of all government officials -- with inherent biases, motivations and perceptions of the political process. (Susan Miller's analysis of Congressional reporters concludes that coverage can be explained in terms of workload maintenance and involves a search for "the ultimate spokesman," supporting Sigal's thesis that reporters allow sources to take the initiative in the newswork process.[22])

Another key element of Sigai's argument is the concept of "bargaining." Bargaining occurs among newspeople working for the same newspaper, among reporters from different newspapers working the same beat, between reporters and news sources, and among news sources themselves. Participants in these bargaining interactions, although often unequal in ultimate power, usually have something the other party wants or needs, or some arsenal of sanctions available to them, so that a system of reciprocal social control prevails among them.[22]

Although Sigal's findings would be applicable to all reporters, it is possible to extrapolate from them the hypothesis that the power relationships between sources and journalists -- dominated, according to Sigal, by sources -- would be even further controlled by government officials when the reporter is perceived as of particularly low status, and as having relatively few weapons in her "arsenal of sanctions," i.e., a young woman working for a relatively low-prestige media outlet. As the numbers of female journalists continue to increase, presumably so, too, will the numbers of women covering the federal government; the ramifications of increasing source control over newsgathering in the nation's capital merit consideration.

Interactions

A third theoretical approach to the reporter-source relationship involves a focus on the interaction itself and the information patterns that typify it. Central to a discussion of the impact of gender on source-reporter and professional peer relationships are the concepts of status conferral and occupational stereotype. As a result, this discussion begins with the work of Roy Carter, who successfully developed a paradigm for considering status variables in source-reporter interactions. The most intriguing of Carter's hypotheses for an investigation of gender impacts include:

1. Friction between reporter and news sources increases with difference in age of the actors. When other relevant variables are held constant, *the greatest friction will occur when the official is much older than the reporter* [emphasis added].
Given Hess' analysis of the relative youth of female journalists, Carter's hypothesis could have important ramifications for their source relationships.
2. Officials' favorability toward the press, and attitudes of news reporters toward officials, are functions of perceived status, both within and between groups.
3. Officials' favorability toward the press is a positive function of the degree to which publicity (or the possibility thereof) is perceived as having status conferral value rather than threat value. (Again, it is appropriate to recall 1989 statistics that show that women continue to work for the least prestigious outlets, limiting the level of status conferral they can offer their sources.)

Carter's hypotheses can be considered a foundation upon which a study of gender impacts can rest; the concept of status as it pertains to source-reporter and professional peer interactions is integral to an understanding of the gender variable.

Other researchers have attempted to characterize the source-reporter relationship through analysis of variables that include shared culture; typologies of reporter/source professional orientation; source motivations; source personality, knowledge and authority; and the impact of publicity on source performance.

Dyer and Nayman's study of the Colorado legislature suggests that reporters and legislators share job-related interests, values and opinions, and that they depend upon one another for help in fulfilling their individual responsibilities.[24] They also hypothesize that newsworkers "may be seeking status conferral from news sources of higher social status, and they may identify with such sources and share the sources' values in doing so."[25] As a result, reporters identified more closely with their sources than the sources reciprocated; Dyer and Nayman suggest that lower-status reporters seek recognition and status from the government officials.

Fico's work approaches the source-reporter relationship from two perspectives: his findings offer insights into the reasons particular sources use reporters more often than others, and the reasons reporters consistently go to a given source more often than they do to others. In his study of statehouse reporters in Indiana, Fico found that senators seeking to influence key legislation used reporters most often for both information and publicity; policy-oriented senators used reporters for publicity but considered them to have little influence on the policy-making process; and specialists -- those senators who work on specific committees to achieve specific ends -- used reporters the least.[26] A study of statehouse reporters in Michigan indicated that reporters seek out sources who are authoritative, knowledgeable and articulate enough to present complex material in a clear and understandable fashion.[27] Fico's findings support Sigal's and Miller's conclusions that the reporter-source relationship is determined to a great degree by the source's initiative, willingness to provide information and ability to lighten the reporters' daily workload.

Herbert Gans concurs. In his study of the CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time, Gans found that the role relationships between news sources and journalists are reciprocal -- but that news sources are more aggressive in seeking out publicity than reporters are in pursuing new sources of information. The success sources have in gaining access to journalists is determined by the source's incentive; social, economic and political power; ability to supply information considered newsworthy; and proximity to the journalist. Again, the impact of gender on all of these variables merits investigation.

Gieber and Johnson share with Gans a perception that reporters and sources are engaged in a tug of war that ultimately produces news. Their three-tier model suggests that reporters and sources cooperate to reach mutually agreed-upon communication goals, but that either side can withdraw from that cooperation upon pressure from his own social system. Their relationship is based on "a high frequency of extra-message communication":

> . . . The individual reporter knows he must get along with his sources, using some time-tested trade tools to chivy information, and accepts with candor and often humor, source peccadilloes. In this context, the working relationship is based on individual reporter-source rapport. . . the extra-channel communications among reporters ameliorates any possible role conflict through the development of group rationales and the sharing of values. Indeed, the intra-group extra-channel communications form the sturdiest link for reporters to the beat and forms the prime cohesive force of the reporters' source of reference.[28]

Gieber and Johnson, then, include in their analysis the impact of peer group relationships on reporters' concepts of the news, their sources and their own status.

Finally, studies by Cohen address the impact of the press on policymakers. Cohen's model views the relationship between the official and the political reporter as a juncture point in a communication channel, a point at which the two intersect. He differs from Gans, Sigal and Gieber and Johnson in his conclusion that the reporter is responsible for defining the news while the source uses the reporter to transmit and receive information. But Cohen's analysis includes consideration of a reporter's role orientation, newsgathering routines, and newswriting criteria; it also discusses the impact of a source's views toward the press (including views of legitimacy, status of reporter and his work); his prior exposure to the press; and his techniques and purposes for transmitting information through the press. The study is unique in its interplay of the various components of the relationship.[29]

Research abounds on the intricacies and eccentricities of the reporter-source relationship; nearly every conceivable variable, from status to motivation to personality types, has been examined -- with the sole exception of gender. The question of the impact of sex on professional relationships, on status conferral and status perceptions, on prestigious assignments and on peer relationships is one that begs exploration.

From Theory to Practice: The Workaday World of Washington Journalists

The initial section of this paper attempts to describe the theoretical moorings of reporter-source and reporter-peer relationships, especially as they have developed in the highly political atmosphere of Washington D.C. It is clear that, although chronically underrepresented, women have long been a part of the journalistic scene in the nation's capitol.

"This is off the record, but..."

The Washington Post in the mid-1970s ran an editorial bemoaning the fact that a justice department story was credited to "it was learned"; the newspaper offered its readers a guide to the euphemisms of backgrounders:

> For the edification of readers who may be unaware of the etymology, the family tree, so to speak, of the wellspring of news, it goes something like this: Walter and Ann Source (nee Rumor) had four daughters (Highly Placed, Authoritative, Unimpeachable and Well-Informed). The first married a diplomat named U.S. Officials, and the second, a government public relations man named Reliable Informant. (The Informant brothers are widely known and quoted here; among the best known are White House, State Department and Congressional.) Walter Speculation's brother-in-law, Ian Rumor, married Alexandra Conjecture,

> from which there were two sons: It was Understood, and It was Learned. It was Learned went to work yesterday in the Justice Department where he will be gainfully employed for four long years.[30]

The backgrounder has become as much a part of daily Washington newswork as the press release -- and it is just as misused. The practice was instituted by Ernest K. Lindley, a correspondent for Newsweek, when he served as president of the Overseas Writing Club just as the Cold War was getting underway. The original participants were less run-of-the-mill journalists than columnists and editors who benefitted from the analysis and insights of government officials loathe to talk on the record. Lindley, who called the practice "a system of compulsory plagiarism," maintained that it was valuable for journalists in search of understanding -- not scoops.

But the number of backgrounders and the complexity of the rules that govern them have increased to the point of confusion, obfuscation and frequent misinterpretation. Today, the derivations of the Lindley rule include the "pure off-the-record" session, in which no information derived from the meeting is to be reported (although journalists can -- and do -- provide the details to their editors). In at least two cases -- during the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy -- reporters present at an off-the-record session shared information with colleagues who were not in attendance, neither of whom felt any obligation to keep the story out of print.[31] Other derivations include the "modified Lindley," which allows partial or vague attribution, such as the stock phrase, "according to government sources"; the "not for attribution backgrounder," in which officials can be quoted as long as attribution is not overly specific; and the "blurred briefing," in which an institution, rather than an individual, is quoted (as in, "The White House said. . .").[32]

Potential pitfalls are numerous for all participants, but because it is the source who provides the information and defines the ground rules, it is the reporter who has the most to lose. AllOtten, reporter for The Wall Street Journal, observed that "reporters have little time to check the facts independently and frequently can't alert readers to the source's bias or motivations. Thus the reporter may find himself being used or may be left out on a limb if a story goes sour; the reporter himself may appear to have misled or misinformed the public."[33] In fact, reporters often do find themselves out on a limb, victim of the political ploys and alliances that comprise Washington's shifting relationships. One of the most common motivations for providing background information is using the media to float a "trial balloon," to test public reaction to a proposal or policy; if the public balks, the source can deny having made the proposal and the press is left to defend itself.[34]

Backgrounders are an important status symbol among the Washington press corps; invitations to meetings with top government officials signal superior position in the professional hierarchy. Reporters who object to background meetings on principle find themselves easily replaced by those more eager for the information and status such interactions can bestow. As a result, the backgrounder -- with its rigid rules, silent compromises, and status conferral powers -- serves as yet another journalistic ritual that identifies individual reporters' status and serves to ostracize from the in-group those who are less powerful and less a part of the status quo.

The Good Old Boys

Nowhere else in the nation is there the kind of powerful concentration of the political elite that flourishes in Washington, D.C. Rubbing elbows with the leaders of the free world can be intoxicating -- and compromising -- for the reporter who is personally flattered and professionally coopted by sources who dispense status along with information. Even in the early days of modern political reporting, Walter Lippmann warned his peers: "The powerful are perhaps the best sources of news but they are also the dispensers of many kinds of favor, privilege, honor and self-esteem. . . . The temptations are many; some are simple, some are refined, and often they are yielded to without the consciousness of yielding. Only a constant awareness offers protection. . . The reporter must avoid social climbing on the pyramids of power."[35]

It is as prevalent a professional risk today. Rivers notes, for example, that the rules governing Wasington journalism are "fuzzy" in their delineation between social and professional occasions.[36] The question becomes, then, to which social occasions -- and to which professional and political contacts -- an individual reporter has access. William Safire, political pundit and long-time columnist for The New York Times, says he learns as much about the political scene at a Washington Redskins game (at which he often shares box seats with such officials as Vice-President Dan Quayle and diplomat Henry Kissinger) as he does in any meeting or press conference. "That's why I go," he explains. "I love the game and I find out everything I need to know -- all at the same time." In fact, Safire continued, he continues to appear on one of the Sunday morning network news programs simply so that he can spend in the "blue room" backstage while waiting to be called; it is here that his fellow guests -- all of them Washington decisionmakers -- feel free to speak openly about the current crisis or international development that is in the news.[37] Journalists in a position to endow status on a source will find their own social positions enhanced, their company sought, their advice requested on national news programs; the political columnist for The New York Times, finds his Washington social and business calendar far more crowded, for example, than does the reporter whose copy appears in The Wilmington News Journal. As we have seen, the Wilmington reporter is far more likely to be a woman.

The Pack. . .

Timothy Crouse, in his examination of the reporters who covered the 1972 presidential campaign, captured the subtleties and mores of the social and professional phenomenon known as "pack journalism" like no one had caught it before:

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> A group of reporters were assigned to follow a single candidate for weeks or months at a time, like a pack of hounds sicced on a fox. Trapped in the same bus or plane, they ate, drank, gambled and compared notes with the same bunch of colleagues week after week. Actually this group was as hierarchical as a chess set. . . The most experienced national reporters, wire men, and big-paper reporters, who were at the top of the pecking order, often did not know the names of the men from the smaller papers, who were at the bottom. But they all fed off the same pool report, the same daily handout, and the same speech by the candidate; the whole pack was isolated in the same mobile village. After a while, they began to believe the same rumors, subscribe to the same theories, and write the same stories.[38]

Crouse describes the extreme end of a spectrum of professional activity that is standard behavor for political reporters. The Wasington Post was plagued by anxiety during the early months of its Watergate coverage -- not because editors doubted Woodward and Bernstein, but because the important members of the "pack" hadn't picked up on the story. And there is another -- and for the purposes of this discussion, more interesting -- aspect of the pack: its social hierarchy, both individually and institutionally, depends solely on status and is a major determinant of a reporter's professional success. The Washington Post looks to The New York Times for confirmation of its news judgment; it cares little about The Wilmington Post. Similarly, reporters in the upper echelons of the pyramid look to one another for news tips, ideas, leads and status -- and pay little attention to those struggling at the bottom of the pecking order.

Access to important peer groups is determined by status -- and, in many cases, is affected by gender. "The men of the press corps try to keep it a man's world, even when it is not," observed William Rivers. "Thus ABC Correspondent John Scali's ultimate compliment for Frances Lewine of AP: 'She's such a good reporter, everyone forgets she's a woman.'"[39]

From Their Perspective: Survey of Women Political Reporters

Research on source-reporter relationships, anecdotal evidence culled from interviews and secondary source materials, and current data on the status of women journalists support the hypothesis that women face a professional Catch-22: Because they work for the least prestigious publications, cover the least prestigious beats, and earn less than their male counterparts, they are unable to confer the professional status to their sources that, in turn, assures them of access to and cooperation from powerful newsmakers. Without such access, women have little hope of making the front pages with stories that demand readers -- and editors' -- attention -- and, in turn, open the doors to bigger newspapers and more prestigious beats.

The final section of this study reports the findings of a survey conducted during the spring of 1991 that measured the perceptions of the women who held Congressional press credentials during that time. The study was designed as a means of determining whether the women who operate professionally within the nation's most prestigious political system perceive differences in their status and access to newsmakers that they attribute to their gender.

Method

The survey instrument was pretested on a subgroup of approximately 20 women political reporters. As a result of the pretest, several questions were rewritten, instructions were expanded, and the survey was shortened so that it would take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Questionnaires and postage-paid envelopes were mailed in March to the 184 women entitled to admission to the Congressional Press Galleries during the spring of 1991. (As a result of cost and time constraints, the sample was restricted to women newspaper reporters and did not include women entitled to admission to the Senate Photo Press Gallery, the television and radio galleries, or the periodical press galleries; in that sense, this should be considered the initial phase of an ongoing study that will ultimately address issues of gender and professional status as they pertain to women employed in all sectors of the Washington media.) This initial sample included representatives of each of the major wire services and all of the major newspapers, as well as a variety of specialty newspapers and small papers with bureaus located in Washington. (It is important to note here that the study does not reflect the views of any of the women reporters who do work in Washington for The New York Times. All of the surveys mailed to New York Times reporters were returned unopened.)

Sample

Of the total population of 184, 43% (N=79) returned questionnaires. Of this group, 11% were between the ages of 18 and 30; 55% were between the ages of 30 and 40; 24% were between the ages of 41 and 45; and 10% were 46 and older; in short, nearly 80% of respondents were between the ages of 30 and 45. Similarly, 73% had worked as reporters for more than 11 years. About 54% of respondents had earned an undergraduate degree; of these, more than half held degrees in disciplines other than journalism. None of the respondents had earned a doctorate, but about 30% reported having had some graduate school training. Access to news sources and impact of gender served as dependent variables; independent variables included: 1) personal factors (aggressiveness, personal style, willingness to socialize); and 2) institutional factors (relationships with editors, salary, beat/story assignments; prestige of publication). About 80% responded to at least one of the open-ended questions included in the survey, several of them at great length, and six telephoned the author to express approval of the project and to offer additional information and anecdotal evidence.

Results

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to measure respondents' views about the influence of a series of variables on reporters' access to sources; respondents were asked to rank the factors from 1 to 8 , with 1 being the most influential: a) the aggressiveness of the reporter; b)the reporter's education and training; c) the reporter's willingness to follow generally accepted rules for background, off the record, etc.; d) the prestige of the publication for which the reporter works; e) the reporter's willingness to cooperate in writing an occasional "puff piece" promoting a source's agenda or goals; f)the physical attractiveness of the reporter; g) the status or prestige of the reporter him/herself; g)the reporter's willingness to socialize with his/her sources. All ranking and close-ended questions were followed by an open-ended question to encourage respondents to provide further information or to respond to the questions in ways not suggested by the answers provided.

Respondents confirmed the study's hypothesis that the prestige of the publication for which a journalist works is the most significant determinant of her access to news sources, with 71% ranking prestige of publication for which one works as the most important determinant, and 90% ranking it as first or second.

Respondents' comments clarified their views: "The status of the publication for which the reporter works and the status or prestige of the reporter him/herself are almost interchangeable," wrote one reporter. "A certified idiot working for The New York Times can get his or her calls returned anytime, anywhere. And it's hard for a reporter to have prestige in this town unless he/she is published by a prestigious publication." Another respondent noted that the capitol's emphasis on prestige and power may be unusual: "Washington is unique in that who you work for is often more important than how hard you try for an interview. Outside the Beltway, that's not necessarily the case." A third noted that a reporter is guaranteed access to the lawmakers from his or her hometown district, but national news goes first to national newspapers: "If a reporter writes for a legislator's hometown newspaper, they are guaranteed access," she wrote, "but other than that, for national reporting, the largest newspapers such as The Washington Post or The New York Times have the best access. They get the major leaks."

In addition to the prestige of the publication itself, many respondents observed that the play a reporter's stories receive in his or her newspaper may also affect access to newsmakers: "Do the reporter and the story get front page play consistently?" wrote one. "If not, the newsmaker becomes unavailable."

Less significant considerations included the reporter's professional aggressiveness, with 37% ranking this variable as third most important; a reporter's education and training, with 48% ranking this variable as fourth or fifth most important (several reporters notedthat most sources are unaware of a reporter's education and training); and the reporter's willingness to cooperate in promoting a source's agenda or political goals, with 34% ranking this variable fourth most important. Respondents offered a variety of additional factors in response to open-ended questions. These included the reporter's prior relationship with the source; the reporter's expertise on his or her beat; and such inexplicable considerations as luck, timing, and the source's need -- or lack thereof -- for publicity at any given time.

One respondent's comments stressed that prestige is not necessarily gender-related:

> "A reporter's expertise and competence are related to status in that the most respected reporters are those who write knowledgeably and accurately and fairly about a subject. People on the beat read what you write and are more willing to trust you and talk to you if they can see these qualities in your writing -- and they can see if you are easily duped or manipulated by others or are superficial. Fairness is also a part of your general reputation or respect earned through coverage. Prestige of publication is #1, e.g., James Baker III talks first to the NY Times and Washington Post. But this is unrelated to gender in that a woman at the NY Times will always have more access to national politicians than a man at the Los Angeles Times or Boston Globe.

But it is unfortunately true that women are far less likely to achieve the professional pinnacle of a reporting job for The New York Times than are their male counterparts. In that context, access is an issue that may be very much affected by gender.

The second section of the survey asked respondents to select statements that best represented their views. Questions were designed to measure respondents' opinions rather than to seek objective facts or figures. Not surprisingly, 80% of respondents believe that male reporters earn more than their female counterparts, all other variables being equal; given the widespread publicity that salary disparities by gender have received, it may be more surprising that the remaining 20% of respondents believe that gender has no influence on salary. One respondent expressed her anger at what she perceived as salary differences: "I have suffered significant salary discrimination because I am a woman. Men get paid much more for the same work -- less experienced men are paid as well. Pure sexism. But to complain is to be drummed out of the business."

The next set of questions was designed to measure respondents' perceptions about their opportunities for advancement within the newsroom, the story assignments they are given and their relationships with their editors. In general, respondents appeared to believe that women are most often assigned "softer" stories while men receive the bigger "hard-news"

story assigments that most editors have no preference in terms of the gender of their reporting staffs, and that being a woman has proved both an advantage and a disadvantage in their work. More specifically:

* 60% responded that the editors at their newspapers have no gender preference when making story assignments; 34%, however, believe that their editors prefer to work with men, and 6% believe that their editors prefer to work with women. ("I've been told that I wasn't aggressive enough because I talked a source into giving me information while a male co-worker blustered his way into getting information," one respondent reported. " [The] results were the same, except in the eyes of my 'men-do-it-better' editor.")

In addition, 73% responded that it is still "a good old boy" network in Washington in that women still are not afforded equal opportunities in the coverage of national politics. "Good old boys are less likely to shoot the breeze with a woman and sometimes such relaxed, friendly conversation yields more information than more formal interviews," wrote one.

"In general," wrote another, "I capitalize on the fact that I'm a woman. Sometimes that means 'playing dumb' to get older men to explain stories or sometimes it means being 'tough' and taking sources by surprise. Men expect you to be a softy because you are a woman but you're not, and he ends up capitulating either out of respect or fear."

* On the question of the effects of gender on the way they approach their work, respondents were evenly split, with 50% believing that the way they do their job has nothing to do with gender, and 50% believing that gender affects their job performance. One respondent reported that, as a bureau chief, she continues to feel devalued by her colleagues: "Though my company pays lip service to equal opportunity, top managers always turn first to other men. I am one of two assistant bureau chiefs for my company and the corporate execs always turn to me last, even if it concerns matters directly under my supervision. They can deal with low- to mid-level women managers because they are lieutenants. They have a hard time dealing with a woman on their own level."

*66% responded that women continue to be assigned to "softer" stories, while men are given the more prestigious, big stories ("just look at the war coverage if you want an example of a male-dominated 'big story," wrote one).

Respondents' comments about these questions were perhaps the most illuminating section of the study. It is intuitively obvious that those women who took the time to answer the open-ended questions may have been those who feel most strongly about the issues; nonetheless, the vehemence of their responses -- both in writing and in the telephone conversations initiated by six of the study's respondents -- suggest that sexism, male exclusivity both in the newsroom and in the capitol halls and chambers, and a sense that their status as women is an insurmountable professional liability are pressing and real concerns. In the words of one respondent:

> "Women journalists, no matter whether they are at the top in experience and title, still must fight for the better assignments or see them go automatically to men. Some male managers are unable to view women as professional and equals. This results in treatment either as sex objects, daughters, or outright hostility. The advantage in being a woman comes in being noticed more quicly in news conferences. Women, fortunately or not, are often seen by sources as less threatening and thus are able to get interviews easily. Women are at a disadvantage also in that they must establish their status quickly or be dismissed out of hand.

Those 50% of respondents who believe that their gender does have an impact on the way they do their jobs agreed, in general, that women reporters often are more willing to talk to the clerks, secretaries and support staff than are their male counterparts ("I think because of my gender those people aren't invisible to me and become sources a male reporter probably doesn't cultivate," wrote one woman.) In addition, 14 respondents (17%) said that women stand out in a crowd of men, a fact that may create opportunities or result in their being called upon in press conferences. While two respondents indicated that any suggestion that women use their physical appearance to their professional advantage was an insult, others reported that dress, personal style and physical attractiveness are very much a part of doing business:

> On occasion, when male sources are flirtatious or speak to me in that "let me explain this so your pretty little head can understand" tone, I play along as it ends up getting me more information. This happens less frequently than it did, say, 10 years ago -- and while it is insulting, it also plays these jerks into my hands. . .

Another described the advantages of being a woman:

> I found that in covering Congress, being female had many advantages. White men dominate Congress. I stood out among the reporters as a woman and I always accentuated that difference by the way I dressed. It helped me get members' attention. I also think they saw me as less threatening and were more willing to talk to me than many of the men at my news company.

A third explained that she had developed a variety of techniques and approaches that used her gender to achieve her professional ends:

> As a college intern at a small paper, I figured out that by sitting down and crossing my legs I could get more time with the police who didn't chat with me the way they chatted with the regular male police reporters. Later I learned that good questions are a better tool than good legs. . .

Respondents were equally vehement about the discrimination they perceive in their newsrooms. Of the 70% who answered the open-ended questions, 55% described sexism in their newsrooms and among their editorial management. "Have been turned down for a reporting job because I was a woman," wrote one. "Have been told by an editor that he skpped over me for an assignment because 'it was too dangerous,' was given an unwanted soft assignment after maternity and was told it was because I would want more time for my child. As a result, I worked time and a half for a year to get myself on the front page and back into a hard news beat. Thanks, guys."

Other concerns included editors' perceptions that women integrate their personal lives into their professional lives: "Most disadvantages come from being a mother -- particularly a single mother. I have been passed over for assignments and beats because it was assumed by someone else that I would not want to spend time away from my child or couldn't make arrangements, etc. This makes me furious. I have also been assigned more family-oriented issues, I feel, because I am a woman and a mother. I don't believe the same would be said of male parents."

Conclusions

This study draws upon the literature on source-reporter relationships and on anecdotal evidence about journalistic professional practices in order to support the conclusion that "the news" results as much from personal power struggles and mutual backscratching as it does from the day's discrete events. The study hypothesizes that the ability to confer status -- derived not from personal skill or talent but from the publication for which one works, the ability to assure one's sources of front-page play, and the ability to operate as collegial equals with one's sources and editors -- is the most significant determinant of the level of access a reporter has to the inner circles of power in Washington; survey respondents confirmed this hypothesis and offered explicit examples of their own experiences. In light of recent national studies of the status of women in the media, it appears that women in general do not enjoy the employment conditions that would allow them to confer such status; by inference, we can conclude that the very situation in which they now function may, in and of itself, be sufficient to prohibit their professional advancement. It may be the case that success, as measured by newswomen themselves, remains out of reach.

Footnotes

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34. Ibid, p. 174.

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36. William Rivers, The Opinionmakers (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 159.

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EXPERTISE, AFFECT, AND POLITICAL INFORMATION PROCESSING

Mei-Ling Hsu
Department of Communication
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(313) 764-7394

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Top Three Student Paper

EXPERTISE, AFFECT, AND POLITICAL INFORMATION PROCESSING

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influences of *affect* and *expertise* on political information processing. Experts differ from novices in encoding, remembering and evaluating political information. Normally, experts have a more complexly organized knowledge structure than novices to differentiate between congruent and incongruent information, to remember both schema-consistent and inconsistent information and to recall information more accurately. Experts are also more stable and extreme than novices in their evaluations of novel political happenings, but over time, or when the judged object becomes more familiar to them, political experts will moderate their judgments. This paper also addresses issues surrounding affect and the affect-cognition relations in tackling how people form their preferences and evaluations of political information. The controversy over the primacy of affect or cognition indicates that affect and cognition are independent as well as interactive. Furthermore, the influences of positive affect on cognitive processes are more pronounced, whereas those of negative affect are harder to predict. Primarily, positive and negative affect are distinct affective states. However, when the intensity is at very high levels, positive and negative affect can be regarded as opposite ends of one bipolar dimension. Based on the findings, this study suggests that future empirical research can explicate the various conditions under which affect and expertise interact in news processing. Implications for mass communication research, particularly in the areas of *media exposure* and *media priming*, are also discussed.

EXPERTISE, AFFECT, AND POLITICAL INFORMATION PROCESSING

Introduction

In recent years, mass communication researchers have increased their attention to the schema-based cognitive approach[1] in studying the processes and effects of political information exposure. Previous mass communication research had suggested that social factors were weighed more heavily than intrapersonal factors in motivating people to seek information via media (Chaffee and McLeod, 1973). Media content and response were thus assumed to correlate with each other without much theoretical regard for the cognitive mechanisms involved. Even when the cognitive variables were taken into account, they were often referred to as the results of cognitive processes. Few explanations were provided to describe the cognitive processes that might explain how mass media bring about these results (Reeves et al., 1982). These problems thus point to the need to reexamine Lippmann's (1922) notions about the *pictures in our head.* The schema-based cognitive approach would allow us to explicitly investigate *how* people think and the differences among individuals in their thinking processes.

The schema concept follows from a fundamental assumption: Perceivers actively construct reality. People create meaning and add on to it the new data of the objective world (Fiske and Taylor, 1984). Once activated, the schemas become ongoing information-processing units that allow the perceiver to provide and to achieve meaning and understanding (Markus and Zajonc, 1985). How, then, might schematic processing affect political perception? Several studies in political cognition (e.g., Fiske and Kinder, 1981; Lodge and Hamill, 1986; Graber, 1988) have shown that the average citizen is enormously selective in processing political information. When new political information is encountered, people are usually able to integrate selected portions into existing schemas through various types of relatedness searches. This view has been well supported by research on *heuristics* (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974 and 1982), which demonstrates that people often are not so rational and tend to be somewhat limited in their information-processing capacity. Therefore, they will take mental shortcuts to make quicker judgments or reduce complex internal data processing demands.

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[1] A schema can be defined as a knowledge structure, based on experience, that organizes people's perceptions of the world. As pointed out in most social and political cognition literature (Fiske and Kinder, 1981; Fiske and Taylor, 1984; Lau and Erber, 1985; Lau, 1986; Lau and Sears, 1986; Fiske, 1986), schemas are hierarchically structured, containing a category label and a set of presumed values for key attributes and relationships among those attributes. The hierarchical organization of the schema allows people to process information in a top-down or theory-driven fashion.

Nevertheless, schema availability and schema use depend greatly on individual differences. Just as schemas vary in scope and complexity, individuals differ in their ability to use schemas effectively. Studies in social cognition, political cognition and mass communication have examined those factors that contribute to individual differences in schematic information processing. Generally, research findings show that the emphasis on conventional socio-demographic variables tends to be problematic,[2] whereas those focusing on *expertise*[3] or prior knowledge (see Fiske and Kinder, 1981; Lau, 1986) have demonstrated more consistent findings. It is thus crucial to further explore the roles that expertise plays in shaping processing mechanisms and opinion formation.

Moreover, whereas traditional voting theories and cognitive consistency theories were primarily theories about *affect* (Lau and Sears, 1986), the cognitive information-processing approach, on which most studies on expertise are based, seem to go too far to ignore affect. That is, some of the individual differences of the effects of the schema-driven information processing may be mediated or interrupted by affect. Therefore, it is also important to distinguish between issues that involve affect and those that do not when dealing with the thinking processes (Jervis, 1986).

To address these issues, this paper will first identify the key factors leading to the expert-novice differences in schematic processing of political information by synthesizing literature in social cognition, political cognition and mass communication. Next, the paper will critically examine the relationships between *affect* and *cognition*, and the problems involved in this line of research. Based on the findings, the paper will seek to integrate literature on expertise and affect to better interpret the individual differences of schema-based approach to information processing, particularly the processing of mediated political information such as news.

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[2] For instance, in her studies of how people process political news, Graber (1988) found that demographic categories such as sex, ethnicity, age, and economic status are spurious variables when it comes to the analysis of thinking processes. Moreover, both Graber's (1988) and Lau and Sears's (1986) studies demonstrate that education is not a particularly good indicator of cognitive ability even though higher education tends to strengthen cognitive skill. As far as the intelligence is concerned, Graber's (1988) hypothesis that differences in intellectual abilities would be reflected in the richness of schematic dimensions and themes was also disconfirmed.

[3] In the public opinion literature, terms like political expertise (Fiske et al. 1983; Fiske et al., 1990), political sophistication (Lau and Erber, 1985; McGraw and Pinney, 1990), political awareness (Zaller, 1990), political involvement (Fiske and Kinder, 1981), and political interest (Graber, 1988), have been used more or less interchangeably to explain the same general family of dependent variables.

Expertise and Schematic Information Processing

Put simply, an expert is a person who is especially good at performance in some domain (Johnson, 1988; Posner, 1988). However, in the study of mass politics, defining expertise requires a different approach. There is no readily obvious domain of political performance for average citizens, so there is no clear criterion for assessing excellence. Most researchers (see Krosnick, 1990) have adopted a view that political expertise is a constellation of qualities. A political expert is presumed to be keenly interested in political affairs, to expose themselves to lots of political information, (both directly through behavioral participation in political events and indirectly through the mass media), to pay close attention to the political information they encounter, and to reflect on the meaning and implications of that information long after it is acquired.[4]

In any domain, experts and novices differ from each other in the structure of a schema as well as the amount of knowledge stored in memory (Lau and Erber, 1985; Lodge and Hamill, 1986). The uninitiated do not have appropriate schemas available; novices possess concrete versions of consensual schemas and use them in simple-minded ways; and experts possess abstract schemas that they use in sophisticated ways. Schema availability and use are shaped by *practice* in that domain. Through prolonged practice, experts acquire more and more complexly organized knowledge (Fiske and Kinder, 1981). Therefore, although some people mostly ignore politics and so cannot use much prior knowledge to organize any political inputs that do interest them, other people clearly benefit from their political expertise. Along this line, Sears and Chaffee (1979) address the importance of *prior constructions* — the experience the individual brings to a situation — to the integration of new information in their study of the 1976 presidential debates.

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[4] The cognitive literature classifies those individuals who have established knowledge structure about a particular domain as *schematics* while those who have not developed elaborated knowledge structure are said to be *aschematics* (Markus, 1977; Lodge and Hamill, 1986). Therefore, the *self-schema approach* has been considered an alternative to measuring expertise. Yet, it is worth noting that political experts are similar to self-schematics only when the measure of political performance or involvement is used, as shown in several earlier political cognition research (Fiske and Kinder, 1981; Fiske et al., 1983; Lau and Erber, 1985). In most cases, it has been difficult to interpret general political expertise by using self-schema measure. It has been shown that political schemas are cued more by the political environment than by personal, individual factors. That is, for the general public, most political perception is what Fiske (1986) calls *mediated perception* in that it is almost all received indirectly through television or newspapers. Accordingly, general political expertise is best measured by factual political knowledge (Zaller, 1990).

The schema-based approach has great relevance to news processing and opinion formation. As most people do not have direct experience with politics in their daily lives, the news media become the main vehicle to supply them with a vast amount of current political information, throughout days, months, and years. Thus, most political perception is *mass-mediated perception* in that it is almost all shaped by the news media.

Accordingly, it should be possible to observe how expertise allows people to decide what news information is relevant to a given theme or schema, and thus what is an important focus for news processing. Specifically, the influences of political expertise can be examined at each stage of schematic processing, including *encoding*, *memory*, and *inference*.

1. Encoding

Studies in social cognition suggest that once cued, schemas can influence how quickly we perceive, what we notice, how we interpret what we notice, and what we perceive as similar and different (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Research on impression formation has shown that many impressions of other people may be based primarily on the memory of the inferences made when the initial schemas are activated to encode their behavior rather than on memory for the actual behavioral inputs (Markus and Zajonc, 1985). This principle of schematic encoding is what Fiske and Taylor (1991) refer to as *earliest moments of perception*. Accordingly, people usually use more salient cues such as age, race, or prior trait descriptions to form impressions.

The schematic encoding principle implies that being schematic (i.e., an expert) on a particular dimension allows a person to filter incoming information about that dimension (Fiske and Taylor, 1984). Therefore, although experts can process more information, it is not necessarily true that they will. Expertise can help in encoding, it can also help in deciding which information is relevant (Fischer and Johnson, 1986). In other words, experts have more domain-relevant schemas to separate relevant information from irrelevant information. Experts may actually search less information than novices, letting prior knowledge and a good sense for relevant information replace extensive search.

The expert's encoding strategies are closely tied to the *automatic* processes,[5] which occur without intention or awareness and do not interfere with other ongoing cognitive processes. Automatic processes serve to filter incoming information semantically (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987). Most researchers indicate that automaticity depends upon familiarity with the stimulus material and overlearning underscores its continuity with the cognitive processes (Bargh, 1988; Isen and Diamond, 1989). Self-relevant information is also likely to be processed automatically, for people are constantly experiencing events with themselves as the central focus (Bargh, 1984; Fiske and Taylor, 1991).

The foregoing reasoning is particularly true when applied to the encoding of political information. It has been demonstrated that schemas about current political happenings rarely encompass strong feelings and prized concerns (Graber, 1988). People, presumably novices, do not generally exclude dissonant information from processing. Dissonance avoidance and active searches for supporting information come into play only when people care deeply about issues or when self-image protection is involved, namely, when people have relative expertise in the domain in concern. For instance, Nimmo (1990) has shown that political experts not only develop selection principles distinct from those of novices, but use these principles to choose which of several news sources they are most likely to monitor for political information.

2. Memory (Storage and Retrieval)

Expertise also affects how people remember (i.e., store and retrieve) information. Much research in political cognition (Fiske et al., 1983; Fiske, 1986; Lau, 1986) has shown that, whereas the general public remembers schema-relevant information and tends to forget irrelevant information, political experts remember schema-inconsistent as well as schema-consistent information. The only type of information not favored by schematic memory is schema-irrelevant information, which has the advantage of neither existing nor newly created linkages in memory. For example, Fiske et al. (1983) examined the recall of political experts and novices who had read an article about the political institutions in a country previously unknown to them. They found that experts recalled more information than novices. Experts also recalled more information that was inconsistent with their prior expectations.

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[5] Automatic processes are customarily defined according to several standard criteria: unintentional, involuntary, effortless, autonomous, and outside awareness (Bargh, 1988). There are varieties of automaticity that differ in degree of fit to the above standard criteria. *Preconscious* automaticity is the purest form of automaticity, for it fits all the standard criteria of automaticity just noted. *Postconscious* occurs when initial conscious processing has unintended outcomes. *Goal-dependent* automaticity, which is not entirely automatic, requires intentional processing and depends on the task undertaken (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Thus, automaticization may be seen as a gradual process, and automaticity itself as continuous with other kinds of processing, rather than discrete; the influence of automatic processes increasingly can be viewed as subject to modification and intervention rather than as inevitable and irresistible (Isen and Diamond, 1989).

Social cognition literature further provides supporting evidence and explanation concerning the effects of schematic processing on memory. Overall, it has been suggested that people remember best those stimulus events that fit their prevailing schemas (Markus and Zajonc, 1985; Fiske and Taylor, 1991). This occurs because well-established schemas bias memory toward consistency with one's prior expectation or judgment. For example, research on stereotyping has shown that people tend to use their prior stereotypic biases to recall information about ingroup and outgroup members. Therefore, people remember more details of an ingroup member than of an outgroup member. They also recall negative things about disliked outgroups (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Research on social hypothesis-testing processes has demonstrated that there is a strong preference for seeking and using hypothesis-confirming evidence when testing hypotheses about other people. This is more likely to be true for novices than for experts (Borgida and DeBono, 1989).[6]

Nevertheless, a number of other empirical studies show that information which is highly inconsistent with reference to a currently active schema is best remembered. A review of the research findings reveals that people are more likely to remember best and most confidently people, events, or situations as fitting their schemas when they are required to form a general impression and when memory is assessed by a recognition test (Markus and Zajonc, 1985). In contrast, schema-inconsistent information is quite likely to be recalled if it competes with the information in the schema, and if people are motivated to make sense of the information (Markus and Zajonc, 1985; Fiske and Taylor, 1991). In other words, it requires *effort* to remember schema-inconsistent information, as people need to elaborate and explain inconsistency. In this effort, people keep tracing long-term memory until the item or event is adequately understood. If this type of self-generated cognitive network is bypassed, as it may be in a recognition task, the special attention given to the inconsistent item or event will not have any impact and schema-consistent events are likely to dominate in memory (Markus and Zajonc, 1985).[7]

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[6] Borgida and DeBono (1989) further explain that when testing hypotheses in their field of expertise, experts are more sensitive to information that could potentially disconfirm the hypothesis in question. By contrast, when experts test a hypothesis outside their domain of expertise, they behave much as the novices do and preferentially remember hypothesis-confirming information.

Therefore, experts, who have greater cognitive capacity in a particular domain, may perform well in remembering inconsistent information (Fiske et al., 1983). Evidence from attitude research on involvement also shows that experts may use more thorough strategies than do the uninvolved and novices in dealing with the very same information content. For example, the *elaboration likelihood model*, or the ELM, (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) postulates two basic routes to attitude change: *central route*, based on the thoughtful consideration of arguments central to the issue; and *peripheral route*, based on affective associations or simple inferences tied to peripheral cues in the persuasion context. The features that characterize central and peripheral routes bear great similarity with the distinctions between experts and novices. Experts, who are more involved in the thoughtful consideration of the issue, are more likely to be motivated than novices to take central routes of their cognitive processing. Novices, on the other hand, have less complex schemas, thus are more likely to depend on peripheral cues. The ELM helps explain why novices cannot discriminate between issue-relevant and irrelevant information in the encoding process, as discussed above.[8]

In relation to political perception, it can be argued that political experts have a complexly organized knowledge structure which allows them to exert more effort in the processing of political happenings. They can encode more competing information in their schemas and thus remember both consistent and inconsistent information. In contrast, political novices easily bypass the details of complex political happenings and can only remember information that is consistent with their activated schemas, mostly in human-interest, person-related, and empathy categories (Graber, 1988). As a result, novices can recall better those tasks that demand mere recognition or general impression.

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[7] An alternative explanation, as provided by Lau (1990), is that since the schemas of political experts are more coherent and tightly structured, they will have sufficient remaining cognitive capacity in active memory that is *inconsistent* with the schema.

[8] The assumption made here does not rule out the possibility that novices can be motivated by other external factors to process political information. However, motivational factors unrelated to issue involvement, which are not our theoretical concern, will not be addressed in this study.

The *accuracy* of the recalled information becomes an issue due to the differences between expert and novice schema activation level. As pointed out by Fiske and Taylor (1984), higher levels of schemas contain less between-category overlap and more within-category detail compared to lower levels. Thus lower level categories are a less accurate basis for distinguishing one stimulus from another. It follows that experts, while performing higher levels of schematic processing, are more likely than novices to recall information accurately.

3. Inference and Evaluation

Experts and novices differ in the way they chunk information, both quantitatively (amount) and qualitatively (strength of interrelations within their schemas as well as the size and organization). The complexity of the knowledge structure is related to the *stability* or *consistency* of the evaluation. Over the years, numerous researchers have shown that the political attitudes of relative experts are more highly intercorrelated and internally consistent than those who are less expert (Lusk and Judd, 1988). Lau and Erber (1985) compared the information-processing differences between experts and novices during the 1980 U.S. presidential campaigns and found that experts were more consistent in how they evaluated the candidates and in how they placed themselves on the issues. Novices, on the other hand, were less able to integrate new information with previous knowledge, thus their opinions about political candidates were more easily swayed. However, novices could still employ one or two issues, probably the one or two most salient issues during a campaign. Zaller's (1990) analysis of the 1972-1974-1976 National Election Studies also demonstrates that there was greater attitudinal stability among the politically sophisticated (experts) and greater susceptibility to priming among the politically unsophisticated (novices). The development of attitudinal consistency and stability among political experts probably follows the fact that such individuals think about political issues frequently and do so in a relatively systematic and principled manner (Judd and Downing, 1990). Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) ELM provides an additional explanation. Specifically, the ELM postulates that the more issue-relevant knowledge, i.e., expertise, people have, the more people tend to be able to counterargue messages opposing their initial positions and to cognitively bolster congruent messages. This, thus, leads to greater attitudinal consistency and stability.

The complexity of people's knowledge structure about a domain is also related to the *extremity* of their evaluations of events or persons in that domain. Studies on intergroup bias have shown that sometimes people will evaluate an outgroup member more extremely than a comparable ingroup member (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). To elaborate this view, Fischer and Johnson (1986) indicate that two factors contribute to the complexity of the knowledge structure: 1) the number of features or attributes used in representing the domain, and 2) the degree of redundancy among these features. The more features used and the less redundant these features, the more complex the knowledge structure. This corresponds to the aforementioned argument that experts perform higher levels of processing, which contains less between-category overlap and more within-category overlap (Fiske and Taylor, 1984). Accordingly, people with more complex knowledge structure, namely, experts, are less extreme in their evaluations of events and people, whereas those with simple knowledge structure, i.e., novices, tend to be more positive about people and events that they like and more negative about those they dislike. Applying this perspective to the outgroup polarization effect mentioned earlier, it can be argued that people usually act like novices when they evaluate outgroups. Due to the limited knowledge and lack of familiarity with the outgroup members, people tend to think about outgroups along few dimensions and in rather simple-minded ways.

Nevertheless, political cognition research has demonstrated the opposite findings on how expertise influences the extremity of evaluations. For example, Lusk and Judd's (1988) analysis of the 1980 National Election Study shows that experts, on average, evaluate political candidates more extremely than do those who are less expert. They explain that the representation of political candidates becomes more evaluatively organized as expertise increases. Similarly, Lau and Erber's (1985) analysis of the same data set indicates that, although experts did consider more issues in evaluating the candidates, both party identification and feelings, which are likely to lead to more extreme judgments, were important in their evaluations than in those of novices.

At first glance, social cognition research and political cognition research seem to make contradictory predictions about how complexity of knowledge structure influences the extremity of evaluations. However, a further examination reveals that the differences can be attributed to the underlying assumptions and the methods used by the two lines of research. Much social cognition research, particularly those studies on intergroup relationships, draws from Linville's (1982) *complexity-extremity hypothesis* that the informational complexity moderates evaluations. Political cognition research, on the other hand, tends to follow Tesser's (1978) view that *thought polarizes evaluations.* As pointed out by Fiske and Taylor (1991), Tesser's theory states that thought makes schemas more organized, internally consistent, and evaluatively uniform, so thought indeed makes the schema evaluatively simpler, and therefore, more polarized, which fits Linvelle's predictions. Indeed, increased political information or sophistication allows people to organize manifestly dissimilar issues within the same schematic structure (Fiske, 1986).

The *time range* involved also needs to be taken into account. Whereas the complexity-extremity hypothesis refers to initial evaluations at one point in time, the thought-polarization hypothesis refers to changes over time. Therefore, as the political expert thinks about candidate evaluations more habitually than someone who is less expert, over time, the expert's political schemas become more evaluatively organized and consistent. As a result, his or her overall evaluation of the object (e.g., the political candidates) becomes more extreme.

Another contributing factor has to do with the nature of the judged object. This is also a distinction between information-poor and information-rich environments (Jervis, 1986). The required judgments studied in social cognition research, especially in the experimental settings, are mostly novel, such as those about outgroup members. Subjects have few preoccupied notions and largely proceed on the basis of the very little information that the experimenters provide. However, few real-world situations are like this. The required judgments examined in political cognition research, particularly in the field surveys, thus are those that have been made previously and they are more familiar to the evaluators. A further distinction of the nature of the judged objects studied between social cognition and political cognition research should allow us to better understand the differences found in the respective research findings.

It is noteworthy that whereas social cognition researchers can easily examine how the extent of expertise influences evaluation through experimental manipulations, political cognition researchers may not capture the whole range of political expertise in relation to their theoretical assumptions. That is, people with extremely high and low political expertise are often underrepresented in the field surveys. Therefore, those who showed more extreme judgments, as in Lau and Erber's (1985) and Lusk and Judd's (1988) studies, could be moderate-level political experts. Similarly, studies on expertise and attitudinal stability mentioned earlier (Lau and Erber, 1985; Lusk and Judd, 1988; Zaller, 1990) may have oversighted the complex situation involved in testing political sophistication. Those who demonstrated less consistency in their political evaluations could be the moderately sophisticated. On the other hand, both the extremely high sophisticated, who have stronger prior political opinions, and the extremely low sophisticated, who show no interest at all in processing political information, may be more consistent in their judgments. In any event, further research needs to be conducted to address this issue.

4. A Working Model

Given the foregoing, a working model can be presented to summarize the expert-novice differences in political information-processing (see Figure 1). As the model shows, the political message needs to be relevant to the existing political schemata to be processed schematically. Expertise in this regard helps decide which information is relevant. If the political message is not relevant to the existing schemata, as is the case of political novices, the non-message cues, such as candidate's personality and affective associations, tend to play a dominant role in the subsequent cognitive processing. If even the non-message cues are not relevant to one's any other existing schemata, there is no processing activity going on at all. People like this are referred to as "uninitiated," although they are rarely found in the real political world.

Moreover, whether the political message can be encoded and further remembered depends on its consistency with the activated schemata or one's motivation to elaborate the processing. Both experts and novices can encode and remember consistent political information, but experts, being more involved or having more cognitive capacity in the political domain, can also encode and remember inconsistent information. Novices, on the other hand, usually do not have the cognitive capacity to engage in schematic processing if the political message does not fit their existing political schemata. Therefore, they tend to rely on peripheral or non-message cues of the judged object to continue their cognitive activities. Again, if the judge object can not cue one's any other schemata, no cognitive activity will be proceeded.

Generally, schematic processing, as occurs mostly to political experts, will lead to more stability of the evaluation. Yet, the extremity of the evaluation depends on one's familiarity with or further elaboration of the message. If one is given the chance to think more about the evaluation, his or her overall evaluation of the judged object tends to be more extreme. In contrast, if one encounters a novel political message and has to make the judgment immediately, his or her complexity of the knowledge structure will lead to less extreme evaluation. The novices' evaluations, as cued mostly by peripheral or non-message cues of the judged object rather than their prior beliefs or opinions, tend to be less stable and more extreme than the experts'. However, novices can make less extreme evaluations than those experts who have increased familiarity with the political message, as mentioned above.

(FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE)

The Role of Affect in Information Processing

Taken together, the foregoing discussion suggests that the future of research on political expertise will be quite rich and multifaceted. One possible avenue of future investigations is to examine the interplay between expertise and other psychological phenomena in processing political information. A closer review of the literature reveals that the expertise research relies heavily on memory and perception but seems to overlook the role that affect plays in information processing (Lodge and Hamill, 1986). The inability of information theories to handle affect with as much sophistication as they offer for memory and perception has been considered the biggest shortcoming of political cognition studies (Lau and Sears, 1986). Indeed, if the schematic processing approach includes people's preferences and evaluations of political information, then affect is obviously central. Even when dealing with the *purely* cognitive processes of recognition and categorization, affect is likely to be critical. A series of empirical research based on the symbolic politics approach (Sears et al., 1986) also suggests that the public responds to political happenings with relatively conditioned affective responses. For example, Miller et al. (1986) explored the consensual ways in which people view presidential candidates and found that the use of person-associated information, which is assumed to be irrational and emotional by the conventional view, was positively associated with education, interest in politics, and media exposure to politics.

If affect forms such a crucial component in social and political cognition settings, it would seem useful to examine systematically some of its parameters and effects of affect on information processing, found mostly in social cognition literature,[9] then to address the issue of how affect and expertise interact with each other in the processing of political information. In the following, I will first define affect by taking account of the the contrasting perspectives in the debate over primacy of affect or cognition. What will be highlighted later are the features of affect and some of the ways that affect influences cognitive processing and regulates social behavior.

1. Defining Affect

One main theoretical matter that must be addressed in considering affect and cognition is whether they are independent or unified. In most social-cognitive models that have been developed, cognition has been seen as a major basis for affective reactions.

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[9] During the past 20 years, extensive studies have been conducted to investigate how affect influences such important social behaviors as altruism, aggression, interpersonal attraction, consumer behavior, and decision-making (Moore and Isen, 1990)

Schachter's (1964) *two components view* and Lazarus's (1982, 1984) *appraisal approach* are representative of such *postcognitive assumptions*. Nevertheless, a number of experimental results on preferences, attitudes, impression formation, decision-making, and some clinical phenomena suggest that there are cases in which affect precedes cognition rather than vice versa. The strongest argument was provided by Zajonc's (1980, 1984) *separate systems* view, which suggests that affect and cognition are separate and partially independent systems. A closer examination of the contrasting views above reveals that much of the debate over whether cognitive and affective systems are linked comes from the ambiguity of *definitional* scheme. Indeed, much of the cognitive and social psychology literature shows that the precise meaning of affect is unclear (Strongman, 1987). This leads to further difficulty in specifying the nature of the impact that affect might have on information processing. It is thus crucial to clarify the definition of affect here.

Generally, affect is a generic term for a whole range of *feelings* and *emotions.*[10] Specifically, feelings and emotions can be further distinguished by intensity and pervasiveness. *Feelings* include relatively mild subjective reactions that are essentially either pleasant or unpleasant, such as attraction, liking, and prejudice. They might also be called *moods*, referring to pervasive, global, generalized affective states that influence seemingly non-specific affective events. *Emotions* refer to a more complex assortment of affects than simply good and bad feelings, such as sadness, anger, delight, and serenity. They are thought of as more intense and short-term, and having physical as well as mental manifestations (Isen, 1984; Fiske and Taylor, 1991).

Using this distinction, it is found that Zajonc's separate systems view is concerned primarily with the aspects of affect that are generally involved in preferences (Zajonc, 1980); we can call these aspects the *feeling* states of affect. In contrast, the postcognitive theorists, particularly Lazarus (1982, 1984), are more interested in stronger affective states such as surprise, anger, guilt, sadness, joy, relief, happiness, love, or shame, which are also referred to as *emotions*. Not being further differentiated, the terms feeling, emotion, and affect have been used interchangeably. The definitional issue of affect suggests that feelings, which encompass more general affective states of individuals, can be generated without a prior cognitive process, whereas emotions, which are socially, situationally and culturally determined, must be aroused by cognitive appraisal.

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[10] Another way to define affect in terms of its intensity is to include *preferences* and *evaluations* between moods and emotions (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Preferences and evaluations are simple, long-term positive or negative reactions to a target, whereas moods are simple, long-term positive or negative feelings without a specific target. Emotion refers to the richer variety of affective states, which may be intense and short-term.

Another source of disagreement rests on what these theorists consider *cognition* to be. The separate systems view argues that although cognition need not be deliberate, rational, or conscious, it must involve a minimum of *mental work* (Zajonc, 1984), which can also be considered intellective knowledge acquisition (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). The postcognitive view, in contrast, maintains that cognition subsumes any non-behavioral mental activity. Thus, affect is non-cognitive in the first sense only, being non-intellective cognition; however, affect is cognitive because it includes any non-behavioral mental processes (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Therefore, both the separate systems view and the postcognitive view offer strong arguments. If the intensity of affect is high enough, it appears to involve more cognition. Similarly if cognitive processes are followed far enough, they appear to reach affect (Strongman, 1987). Affect and cognition thus can be regarded as bidirectional, with affective state engendering certain types of cognitive activity and cognition leading to distinctive affective experiences (Moore and Isen, 1990).[11]

The *automatic processes* addressed previously may seem especially applicable to affect. Several lines of research suggest that affect can sometimes have qualities that make it seem like a product of automatic processing. Social judgments, inferences about people and other components of attitudes can be the consequences of the automatic processing affect (e.g., driving to work). *Feelings*, particularly, have characteristics and effects similar to those of stimuli that are processed automatically (Isen and Diamond, 1989). Specifically, the issue of automaticity helps us understand why affects will be experienced unconsciously and effortlessly, as Zajonc (1980, 1984) has proposed.

2. Positive vs. Negative Affect

The distinction between various affective states such as feelings and emotions indicates that the *intensity* of affect will influence how affect and cognition interact. Nonetheless, the intensity of the affective state is but one factor that influences the subsequent cognitive processing. Another way, upon which most existing research has focused, is to conceptualize the features and functioning of affect in terms of the degree of internal specificity, such as *positive* vs. *negative* affect (i.e., valence). Research evidence indicates that both positive and negative affect have marked influences on thinking processes, judgment, and behavior, although most studies suggest that the influences may not be symmetrical for the two types of affect (Isen, 1984).

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[11] Buck (1990), on the other hand, argues that the controversy between Zajonc and Lazarus can be resolved by the distinction between knowledge by *acquaintance* and knowledge by *description*. Knowledge by acquaintance is associated with holistic and synthetic kind of cognitive processing, whereas knowledge by description is associated with analytic, sequential linear cognitive processing. At some point, knowledge by acquaintance must be transformed into knowledge by description. This is what Buck (1990) refers to as the process of *appraisal*.

Generally, the influences of positive affect on cognitive processes are more pronounced and relatively direct, while the influences of negative affect are more complex and harder to predict. (Isen, 1984; Crockett, 1988) Specifically, a substantial body of evidence suggests that positive affect can serve as a retrieval cue for positive material in memory, influencing what comes to mind, and thus influencing many other cognitive processes such as judgment, evaluation, expectation, decision-making, and thus the behavior that follows from those processes (Isen, 1984; Sypher and Sypher, 1988; Isen and Diamond, 1989). In a series of studies, Isen and her colleagues (Isen and Means 1983; Isen and Diamond, 1989) found that positive affect helps maintain the positive state and that induced affective states lead to a tendency to use heuristics to simplify decision making in problem-solving situations. There is also evidence indicating that positive affect is associated with increased sociability and benevolence to both the self and others (Isen, 1984).

To further explain the impact of positive affect on cognition, Isen and Diamond (1989) argue that positive affect may be involved in promoting chunking or a process similar to chunking, which involves a change in categorization, classification, or grouping or material. In doing so, people in positive-affect conditions are more able to see ways in which categories of people might fit into positive superordinate categories. This process is important for social categorization and judgment; people who are feeling happy may include, in positive categories groups of people not typically included in those categories. It should be noted that this effect holds only for positive categories, not for negative ones.

The effects of negative affect on cognition, as noted, are less consistent than are those of positive affect. On the one hand, people in negative states may tend to see the negative side of things and be more pessimistic; but on the other hand, the negative state may stimulate attempts to change or eliminate the unpleasantness, and these attempts may involve engaging in rather positive behavior and thinking (Isen, 1984; Crockett, 1988). It appears difficult to predict, in the case of negative affect, whether thought and behavior will be affect-compatible (mood maintenance) or affect-incompatible (mood repair).

Nevertheless, some interpretations can be found when individual factors are taken into account, especially in the case of intense emotional states. To this point, the self-concept assumptions seem applicable. That is, people might focus on positive material in order to make themselves feel better. Threats to the self arouse negative affect and support for the self produces positive affect. For example, studies on using entertainment and mood management (Zillmann, 1988) suggest that individuals are capable of choosing materials for exposure that modify and regulate affective experiences and mood states in desirable ways.

The mood-maintenance and mood-repair hypotheses are motivational propositions derived from self-regulatory models within cognitive social learning theory (Crockett, 1988). There are also non-motivational factors that may produce purely cognitive effects. That is, affect influences social cognition by determining the amount of cognitive effort expended in information processing. Research on depression (e.g., Sullivan and Conway, 1989) has shown that negative material may come to be less well elaborated and interconnected in the cognitive system than positive, possibly as a result of habits of mood-repair. This supports the view that negative affect is associated with decreased cognitive effort, and positive affect is associated with increased cognitive effort. Evidence from attribution research (see Fiske and Taylor, 1991) also demonstrates that dispositional attributions require minimal effort, whereas situational attributions require more effort, for they cannot be inferred directly from behavior. Therefore, depressed persons make internal attributions for their success and failure in tasks, while non-depressed persons show a self-serving attributional bias. The negative affect is thus expected to lead to low-effort attributional processing.

However, there has been evidence which shows the opposite result. For instance, Schwarz (1990) indicates that the negative affective states foster the use of more elaborated, detail-oriented, analytical processing strategies, whereas positive affective states foster the use of less elaborated and heuristic strategies. As individuals in negative affective states are more likely to focus their attention on the specific features of the situation that elicited their feelings, they are less likely to encode incidental information, and less likely to get distracted by other tasks. Therefore, negative affect may be accompanied by an increased readiness to use more effort-based strategies to obtain information that is relevant to the situation at hand.

To resolve the conflicting findings, it is crucial to take a closer look at the nature of negative affect, which is more complex than that of positive affect. An interesting possibility is to examine the specific negative affective state rather than a comparison between global *positive* or *negative* affective states. To this point, Higgins (1987) distinguishes between *agitated* and *dejected* negative affect. Agitated affective states such as fear, threat, or anger, result from a threat of negative outcomes. In contrast, dejected negative states, such as sadness or disappointment, result from a lack of positive outcomes. Accordingly, agitated states should be associated with motivation to avoid negative outcomes, whereas dejected states should be associated with a motivation to approach positive outcomes. Approach and avoidance situations, however, are characterized by a basic asymmetry in the amount of analytic reasoning that they require. When we want to obtain a certain positive outcome, it is usually sufficient to determine *one* of the possible ways of obtaining the desired outcome. When we want to avoid a certain outcome, on the other hand, we need to determine *all* possible causal links that may produce this outcome in order to avoid it. Therefore, agitated negative affective states, which are usually associated with an avoidance motivation, are more likely to trigger an elaborated and analytic processing style, as suggested by Schwarz (1990), than are dejected negative states, which are usually associated with approach motivations, as shown by Sullivan and Conway (1989), and Fiske and Taylor (1991).

Given the state of affairs described above, it appears that there is more differentiation among negative affect than among positive affect, so that negative affective states do not match as easily as do the positive ones. However, negative mood congruence does develop reliably in one important case, namely, for people who are depressed, for whom negative events are presumably mood-congruent and memorable. This is because the negative mood-congruence effects may occur when people focus on the applicability of the material to themselves. Depressed persons may deliberately focus on negative material to rebut it, to improve themselves, or to confirm their self-image, so the effects may or may not be automatic (Fiske and Taylor, 1991).

4. Asymmetry Between Positive and Negative Affect

Another question of interest is whether positive and negative affect may be distinct affective states, with different effects and different behavioral implications, rather than opposite ends of one bipolar dimension. Most social psychological and cognitive psychological research has shown that positive and negative affect may actually be independent of one another, and might sometimes occur in the presence of one another (see Diener and Iran-Nejad, 1986, for a review). Mass communication researchers such as McLeod et al. (1989) also found in their 1988 presidential election study that positive and negative affect do not have the symmetry often assumed in the use of thermometer scales. Factor-analytic studies of the Multiple Affect Adjective Check List (MAACL) provide further evidence that the positive and negative items from the MAACL load on separate factors rather than on opposite poles of the same factor(s) (Gotlib and Meyer, 1986; see Moore and Isen, 1990, for a review)

The asymmetry between positive and negative affect can be explained in the context of work on automaticity, as mentioned previously. Positive affect, being more familiar and overlearned, should be more readily processed automatically, thus may tend to influence the cognitive system more rapidly. However, negative affect situations, being less familiar, should be more demanding of attention and cognitive capacity (Isen and Diamond, 1989). Focusing on the informational functions of affective states, Schwarz (1990) argues that negative affect informs the individual that the situation is problematic, thus increases his or her cognitive accessibility of analytic reasoning procedures and the individual's motivation to engage in elaborated processing. Positive affective states, on the other hand, are associated with wider focus of attention than negative affect. They inform the individual that his or her current environment is a safe place. Accordingly, the individual in positive affective states may be more likely to take risks and to use simple heuristics in information processing.

Diener and Iran-Nejad (1986) provide a further explanation of the asymmetrical relationship between positive and negative affect. Their study shows that positive and negative affect do not occur together at high levels of intensity. However, if one type of affect is at low levels, the other type of affect can be at any level of intensity from low to high. This is particularly true in considering the *time frame*. When a longer time frame is involved, people's reports of positive and negative affect are independent. That is, over time, whether one has felt distressed, fearful, or hostile is unrelated to whether one has also at other times felt elated, enthusiastic, and excited (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Taken together, time frame, intensity and complexity jointly determine which of two structures captures people's emotional experiences. Intense, simple, short-term emotions show a negative correlation between positive and negative affect, but long-term summaries of complex and less intense emotional experience show no correlation between positive and negative emotions (Fiske and Taylor, 1991).

5. Co-occurrence of the Same Valenced Affect

One final issue regarding the characteristics of positive and negative affect is whether affective states of the same hedonic valence (e.g., fear and anger) tend to co-occur. Isen (1984) has reviewed a good deal of evidence supporting the idea that one's mental representations of people, places, and events are associated with each other in terms of how we evaluate them — positive representations are associated with each other as are negative representations. The cognitive and behavioral effects also have to do with one's current affective state in recalling. Bargh (1988) argues that information stored in memory is associatively linked with similarly evaluated information, through association with some general representation of goodness or badness (Clark and Isen, 1982; Isen, 1984). Diener and Iran-Nejad (1986) also found that the co-occurrence of affects of the same hedonic tone is stronger than the inverse relation between affects of opposite hedonic tone. This has interesting implications for theories of affect. If various discrete effects co-occur, it suggests that they must fit into some larger, more all-encompassing structure. It also suggests that certain underlying processes must be common to a number of affective states. Indeed, studies on mood-congruence (Bower, 1981) have shown that good moods often lead people to be more helpful, more sociable and nicer to themselves, to recall pleasant things, to judge things positively, to make faster and looser decisions, and to be more compliant.[12] Nonetheless, the congruence principle has more variable effects on negative affect. A bad mood state may lead people to be more or less helpful, to remember negative things if truly depressed, sometimes to make negative judgments, and to be less often compliant (Moore and Isen, 1990; Fiske and Taylor, 1991), but the coping mechanisms, such as mood-repair or self-improvement, ought to move in the opposite direction (Fiedler, 1990).

Affect and Expertise in Schematic Information Processing

The preceding discussion of political expertise and affect reveals that both the complexity of knowledge structures and the affective states can influence thinking and cognitive processes, including encoding, retrieval of information and social judgment. Whereas findings on the influences of expertise and affect have been respectively well documented, very few studies have attempted to integrate them in interpreting the individual differences of the schema-driven cognitive processing and its subsequent effects. Nevertheless, based on the research findings reviewed above, the following postulations about the relationships between political expertise and affect can be made:

Proposition 1: *For experts, affect is more likely to lead them to engage in retrieval-based processing; for novices, on the other hand, affect serves an informative function, in which the evaluative judgments are based on the implications of the mood state itself.*

This assumption can be supported by evidence from several lines of research. To begin with, the mood-congruence principle suggests that the increased accessibility of mood-congruent material in memory may lead to mood-congruent associations that may further influence the evaluation of the target. Most importantly, mood-congruent recall is most likely to be obtained for self-referenced material (Blaney, 1986). It follows that experts, are more likely to engage in schematic processing, and thus can retrieve more mood-congruent material in memory. Moreover, Schwarz's (1990) *informative-functions hypothesis* suggests that individuals base evaluative judgments on the information provided by their affective responses. This seems particularly plausible when little other information is available, when the judgment is overly complex, or when it is too cumbersome to make a judgment on the basis of piecemeal information-processing strategy. Therefore, the affective state can serve an informative function to novices, for whom the political world can cue little stored knowledge. This also suggests that the impact of individual's affective state decreases as the availability of competing information, as can be encoded by experts, increases.

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[12] This can be interpreted as evidence for the importance of nonconscious affective reactions in guiding the process of impression formation (Niedenthal and Cantor, 1986).

Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) *elaboration likelihood model* also deserves our attention here. Specifically, the ELM holds that affect may serve as a peripheral cue, or it may influence the extent or direction of argument processing. As noted, the features that characterize central and peripheral routes bear great similarity with the distinctions between experts and novices. Petty et al. (1988) further distinguish between the different conditions under which elaboration and affect interact, which has important implications for the affect-expertise relationship in political information processing and opinion formation. A revised working model of political information processing can be derived to further differentiate levels of thought elaboration and the valence and intensity of the affective states (see Figure 2). First, under conditions of high-elaboration likelihood, affect is expected to color or bias the ongoing information-processing activity. That is, when people are actively processing a message, affect can serve as a retrieval cue for material in memory, influencing what comes to mind. Generally, as shown in the model, positive affect should enhance the accessibility of positive associations and negative affect should enhance the accessibility of negative associations. When the elaboration likelihood is moderate, affect is expected to have an impact on the extent of elaboration and thus moderate the route of information processing. Both high- and low-intensity affective experiences can hinder or disrupt information processing and thereby increase the likelihood of peripheral over central route of processing. According to the mood-congruence principle (Bower, 1981), positive affect can induce positive evaluation, but negative affect may lead to more variable outcomes. The cognitive processing strategies associated with negative affect will be further specified in Propositions 2 and 3. The medium level of affective intensity under moderate elaboration conditions will function in the same way as the affective experiences under high elaboration conditions. That is, positive affect should enhance the accessibility of positive associations, and negative affect should enhance the accessibility of negative associations. Finally, under the conditions of low-elaboration likelihood, affect, to the extent that it has any effect on cognitive processing, should serve as a simple peripheral cue. The mood-congruence principle mentioned above can also be applied here.

(FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE)

Although more evidence is needed to equate political expertise with the extent of cognitive elaboration, previous discussion on the expert-novice differences in storing and retrieving political information has shown that political experts have complexly organized knowledge structure which allows them to exert more effort in cognitive processing. Also, as pointed out by Linville (1985), the affective aspects of cognitive complexity has evaluative consequences. People high in cognitive self-complexity (expertise), experience smaller mood swings and self-appraisal following failure or success. Generally, greater cognitive complexity is associated with less extreme affect or evaluation.

Proposition 2: *Given the same extent of expertise, the negative affective states foster the use of more elaborated, detail-oriented and analytical processing strategies, whereas positive affective states foster the use of less elaborated and heuristic strategies.*

As discussed previously, negative affect informs the organism that its current situation is problematic, individuals are more likely to focus their attention on features of the situation that elicited their feelings. Thus, they are less likely to encode incidental information, and less likely to get distracted by other tasks. Accordingly, negative affect may be accompanied by an increased readiness to use more elaborated strategies to obtain information that is relevant to the situation at hand. On the contrary, positive affect, due to the mood-maintenance function, often leads to more favorable attitudes than no affect at all. It follows that positive affect fits a piecemeal approach and can be sometimes cued automatically, and thus involve less cognitive effort and elaboration (see Figure 3).

(FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE)

Postulation 3: *Given the same extent of political expertise, negative affect associated with an avoidance motivation is more likely to trigger an elaborated and analytic processing style than are dejected negative affective states.*

Figure 3 further specifies the different processing strategies associated with negative affect. As the influences of negative affect on cognitive processes are more complex than those of positive affect, the distinction between specific negative states will further illustrate the processing strategies associated with the affective cues. As mentioned earlier, Higgins's (1987) differentiation between agitated and dejected negative affect explains why agitated negative affect involve more cognitive effort than dejected negative affect. This occurs because the former is associated with the motivation to avoid negative outcomes by considering all possible ways for avoidance, whereas the latter is associated with the motivation to determine one possible way to approach positive outcomes. Therefore, for people who share the same degree of political expertise, the different types of negative cues triggered by the message may lead to various processing styles and the following effects.

Summary and Implications

The primary purpose of this paper is to synthesize literature in social cognition, political cognition and mass communication concerning the influences of affect and expertise on political information processing. The paper began with a discussion of the schema concept and its relevance to political perception. Recent studies in social cognition and political cognition have shown that schema availability and schema use depend on individual differences, especially the extent of expertise. Experts and novices differ from each other in the ways they encode, store, retrieve and evaluate information. Normally, experts have a more complexly organized knowledge structure than novices to differentiate between congruent and incongruent information, can remember both schema-consistent and inconsistent information and can recall information more accurately. Experts are also more stable and extreme than novices in their evaluations of novel political happenings, but over time, political experts will moderate their judgments when the evaluated object becomes more familiar to them.

The elaboration of the critical features surrounding *affect* presents an effort to place the schema-driven information-processing approach into a new light. The debate over the *primacy* of affect or cognition indicates that affect and cognition are independent as well as interactive. They can be viewed as endpoints on a continuum, depending on the degree of the intensity. The influences of affect on cognitive activity also differ in terms of the degree of the internal specificity of affect. The most studied area has been the impact of positive vs. negative affect on cognition. The influences of positive affect on cognitive processes were found to be more pronounced, whereas those of negative affect are harder to predict. Primarily, positive and negative affect are distinct affective states. However, when the intensity is at very high levels, they can be regarded as opposite ends of one bipolar dimension. This contention has also been supported by evidence that affects of the same hedonic tone tend to co-occur.

An integration of literature dealing with expertise and affect suggests that future research can further explicate the different conditions (e.g., extent of expertise, intensity and valence of affect) under which affect and expertise interact and their subsequent cognitive effects. This paper has discussed how experts would be more likely to take central routes to process information, whereas novices could be influenced by peripheral cues, presumably the affective associations. Furthermore, given the same degree of political expertise, a negative affect is more likely than positive one to lead to more analytic processing; among the various negative states, an agitated negative affect involves more effort-based cognitive strategies than a dejected one.

The foregoing discussion has several important implications for mass communication research, particularly those areas concerning *media exposure* and *media priming*. First, it has been shown in recent studies that survey measures of media exposure do not perform well in predicting individual differences in political learning from the news (see Price and Zaller, 1990).[13] On the other hand, the citizen's likelihood of news reception was found to be better indicated by *background level of political information*. Political expertise, which is best measured by factual political information, provides a new perspective of examining the relationship between exposure to political news and subsequent cognitive activities.

Moreover, the integration between expertise and affect in processing political information explains why people less involved in politics (political novices) are more likely to be swayed by the manner of presentation of the news stories, as pointed out by Graber (1988). Since political novices have less complex schemas to process and integrate news information, they can be influenced more than the experts can be by the affective aspects from the news stories, particularly those dealing with the human interest factors. Therefore, even if political novices do not have strong feelings about the political happenings, their encoding, recalling and evaluations of the happenings will be influenced by the affective cues presented in the news stories.

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[13] Specifically, Price and Zaller (1990) point out that self-reported media use measures suffer from potential over-reporting; from a failure to distinguish content of different media; from large differences in the combinations of media by which different people may stay abreast of the news; and from large differences in what individuals actually learn from media to which they may all have been equally exposed.

The differences between experts and novices in their processing modes also help clarify the findings, mostly in agenda-setting research, that the television reliants are more likely than the newspaper reliants to be influenced by the manner of media presentations (Weaver et al., 1981; Eyal, 1981). Research on mental effort have shown that television enjoys an obvious advantage in reducing mental effort (Salomon, 1984). Using the schematic processing approach, it can be argued that the rapid succession of visual and verbal information in television news stories hardly allows the viewers enough time to engage in more complex and thorough cognitive processing. This further cultivates a processing route based on peripheral cues, in this case, the affect-laden visual images. Therefore, unless an issue or event presented in the television news is self-referent to the viewers, the viewers' evaluations can be largely influenced by peripheral cues on television news. In contrast, newspaper reliants are allowed to process the news at their own pace, thus can exert more effort in cognitive processing. It follows that people who are more knowledgeable about or active in political affairs (political experts) can generate counterarguments while reading the news stories, thus are less likely to be swayed by the news presentation. People who are less involved in politics (political novices), though they may not necessarily generate counterarguments when reading the news, will be less easily influenced by the written word than by viewed television news. It should be noted that the above postulation does not imply there is a clear-cut distinction between television and newspaper reliants, but it does point out how different presentations of the media information can induce different cognitive processing. The impact of media presentation on cognition also depends on people's expertise in that domain.

Moreover, the interplay between expertise and affect offers an alternative explanation to the media *priming* effects, as have been studied by Iyengar and his colleagues (Iyengar, et al., 1982; Iyengar, 1987; Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). According to the priming assumption, by calling attention to certain aspects of national life, while ignoring others, the news media set the terms by which political judgments are rendered and political choices made (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). However, the priming researchers seem to rely on the heuristics contention to explain why media priming occurs. Specifically, they argue that for most people, politics is not the top priority in daily life, unless it is related to personal experience. When faced with a judgment of choice, people seem to take intuitive shortcuts rather than perform exhaustive analysis. One such shortcut, or heuristic, is reliance upon information that is most easily accessible, which is pervasively provided by the news media, especially television news. Krosnick (1990) further found that novices appear to be primed on those aspects most directly and concretely implicated by the news coverage while experts, insofar as they are primed at all, are influenced at a more abstract level. Nevertheless, evidence from research of the influences of affect on memory and judgment shows that affect can influence judgments and decisions to engage in various behaviors by affecting the content that becomes accessible and comes to mind when one is in the process of weighing alternatives and deciding upon a course of action. Specifically, affective state at the time of encoding has sometimes been found to be associated with superior memory for information compatible with that affective state. It can be argued that, depending on the level of expertise, affective cues can be informative or peripheral, further influencing the use of accessible information and subsequent cognitive activity. The way that affect-laden responses might be structured and processed in the political thinking of ordinary citizens explains why framing a political issue by affect-laden labels is important in political persuasion.

Overall, whereas communication researchers have come a long way in addressing the cognitive mechanisms of mass media processes and effects, individual differences in level of expertise as well as the extent and specificity of affect cannot be overlooked. Discussion in this paper implies that future research can further explicate the different conditions under which affect and expertise interact and explain the resulting cognitive effects. Studies in this line of research will especially provide new insights for a better and more precise understanding of political information processing.

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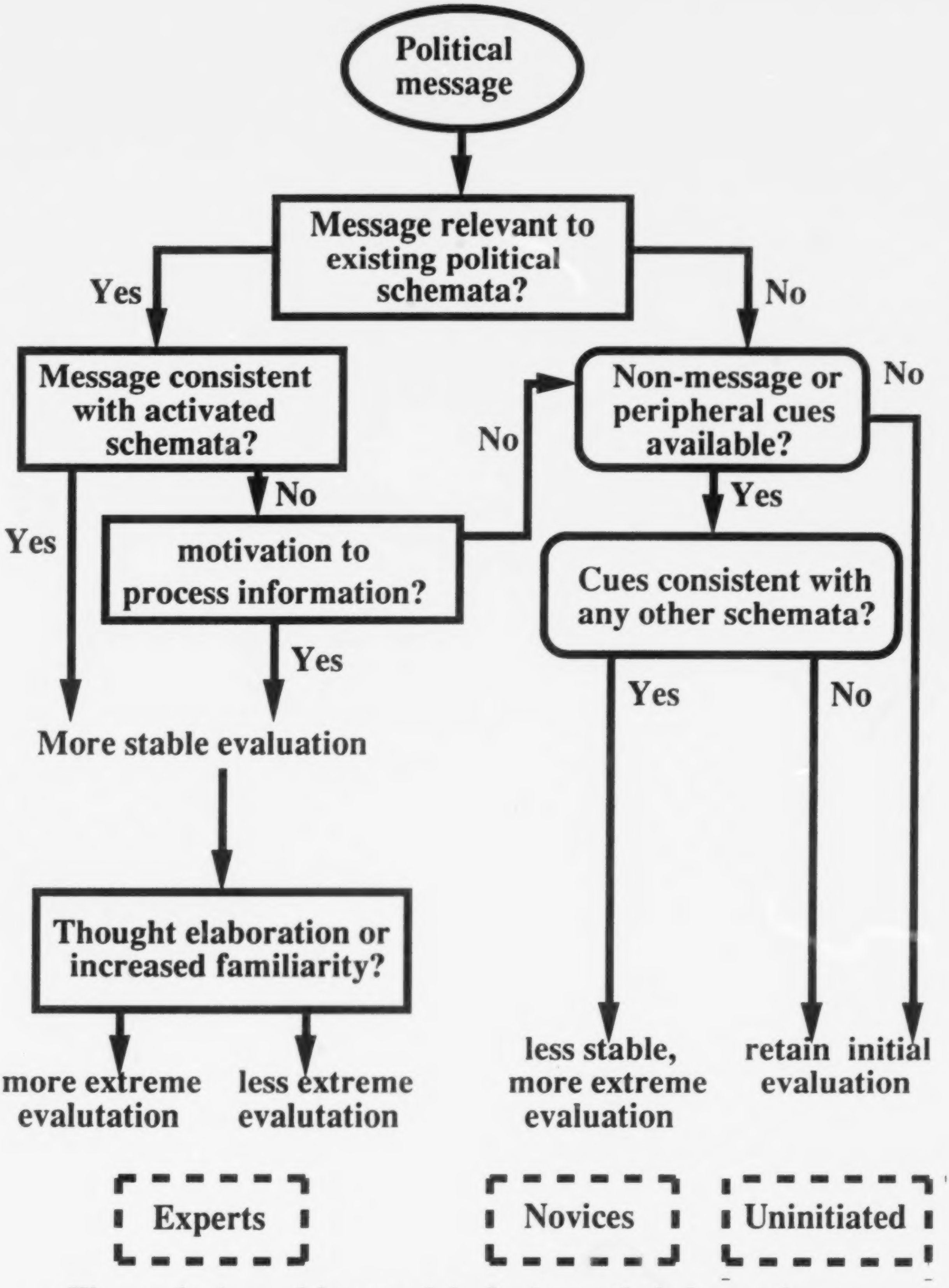
Political message
Message relevant to existing political schemata?
Yes
No
Message consistent with activated schemata?
Non-message or peripheral cues available?
No
No
No
Yes
Yes
motivation to process information?
Cues consistent with any other schemata?
Yes
Yes
No
More stable evaluation
Thought elaboration or increased familiarity?
more extreme evalutation
less extreme evalutation
less stable, more extreme evaluation
retain initial evaluation
Experts
Novices
Uninitiated

Figure 1: A working model of schematic information-processing between experts and novices

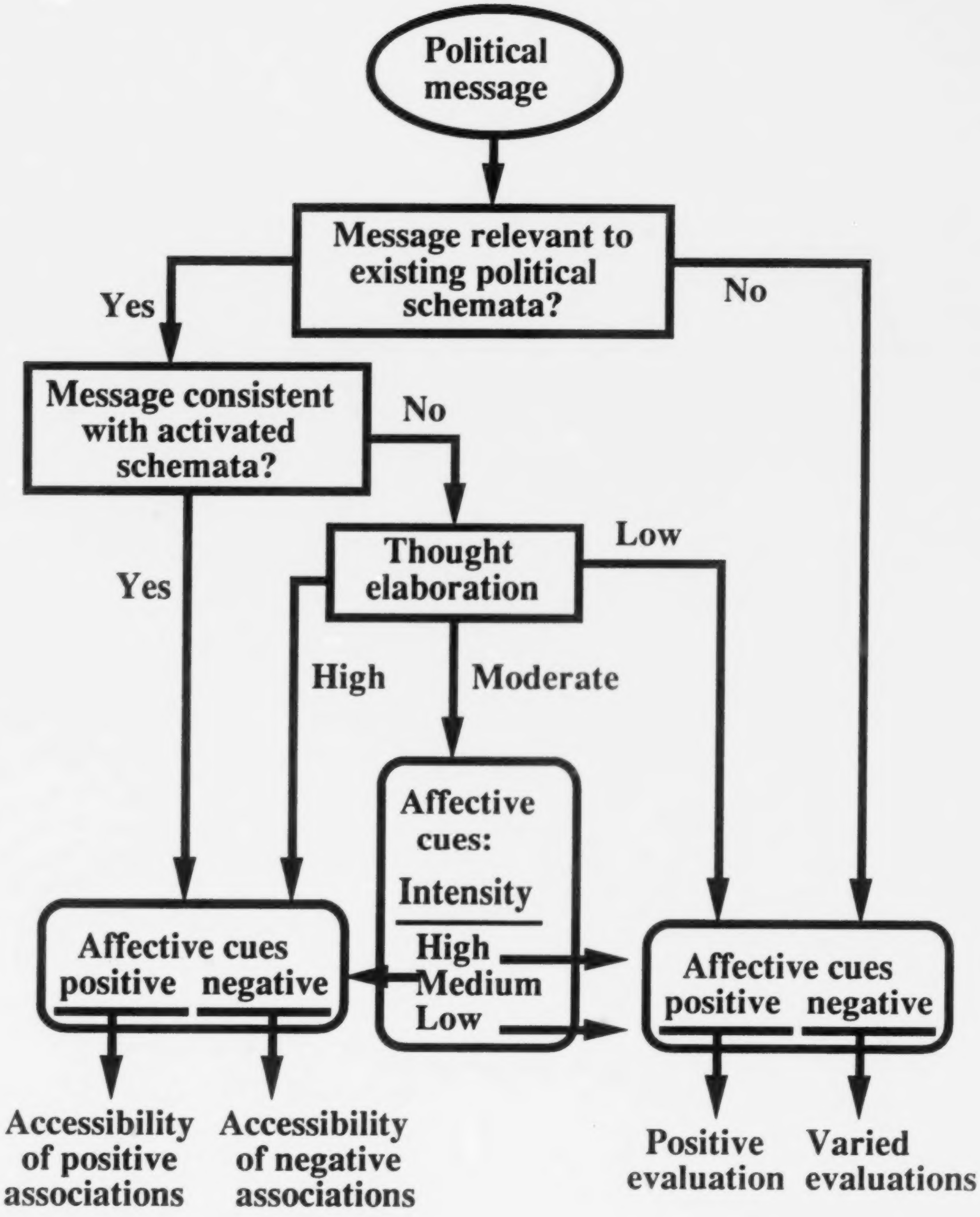
Political message
Message relevant to existing political schemata?
Yes
No
Message consistent with activated schemata?
No
Yes
Thought elaboration
Low
High
Moderate
Affective cues:
Intensity
High
Medium
Low
Affective cues
positive negative
Affective cues
positive negative
Accessibility of positive associations
Accessibility of negative associations
Positive evaluation
Varied evaluations

Figure 2: A working model of the roles of expertise and affect in information processing

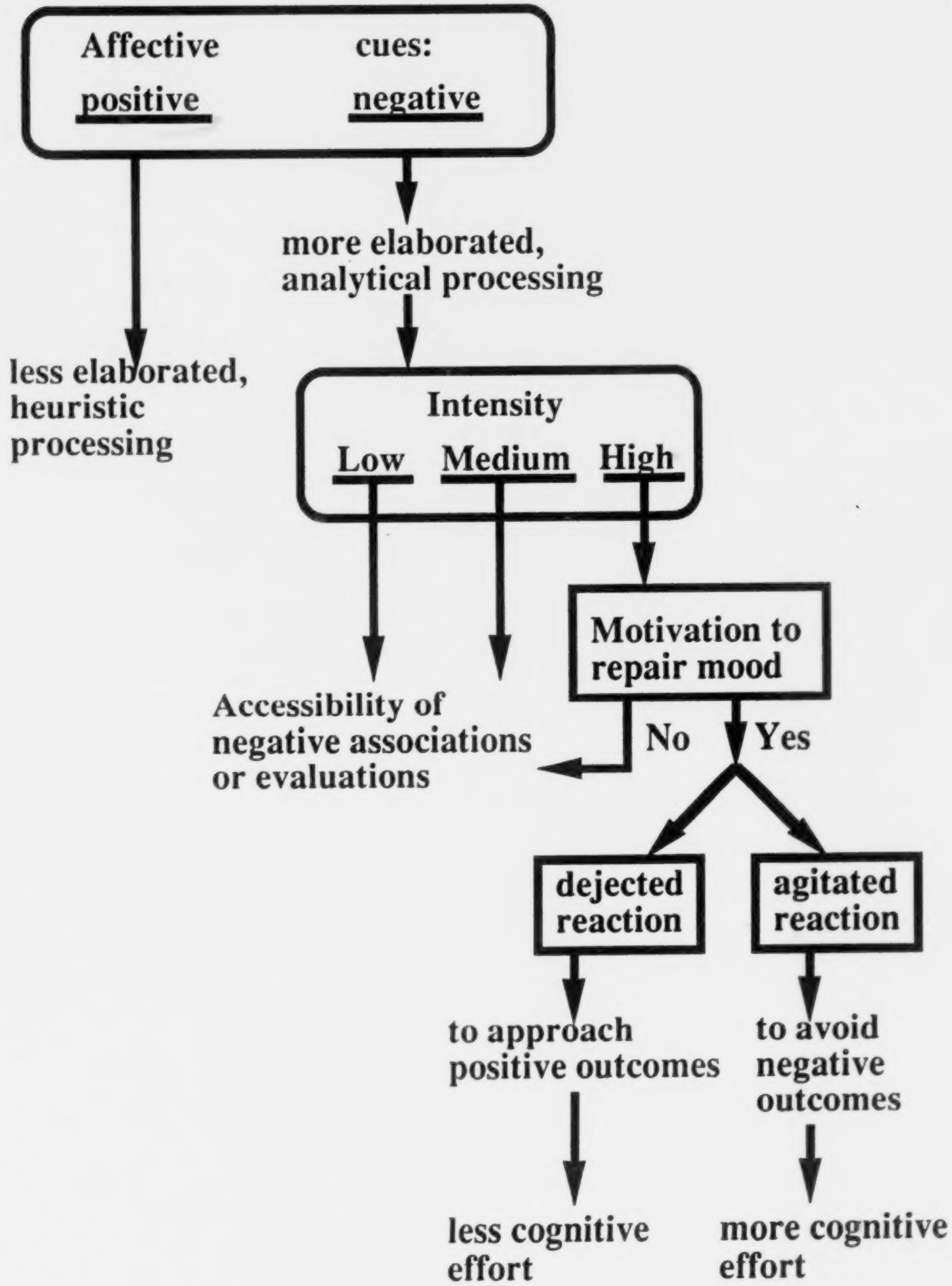
Affective cues:
positive
negative
more elaborated, analytical processing
less elaborated, heuristic processing
Intensity
Low
Medium
High
Motivation to repair mood
Accessibility of negative associations or evaluations
No
Yes
dejected reaction
agitated reaction
to approach positive outcomes
to avoid negative outcomes
less cognitive effort
more cognitive effort

Figure 3: The relationships between the valence and intensity of affect and the processing strategies

Trust in Government and Active Participation: The role of media use, ideology, personality and political interest in the democratic urge.

Oscar H. Gandy, Jr.
Annenberg School for Communication
University of Pennsylvania
3620 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6220
215-898-7030

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Introduction

The quality of the average American's participation in government has long been a concern of political observers. Researchers in the area of political communication have sought to understand the role of the media in contributing to this generalized lack of interest in governance. Beyond the recognition that the somewhat cumbersome registration requirements serves as a disincentive for many in the electorate, much of the recent work on elections and voter participation has focused on the absurd tastelessness of the presidential campaigns and the "dirty tricks" and negative ads which characterizes the campaigns for elective office.[1] Many observers share the view that voting is a rather limited form of participatory democracy, but they note that participation beyond voting is extremely rare, and is usually limited.[2] This study seeks to examine aspects of political participation which we believe to be more important than voting, with specific attention to the contribution of the mass media to the level of involvement.

Media Use and Politics

Beyond the emphasis on voting behavior, the predominant concern in political communication research appears to be the relationship between media use and knowledge and information holding[3]. This is an understandable reflection of the underlying democratic concern about the contribution of the mass media to the idealized "informed electorate."[4] Researchers concerned about the inadequacy of press coverage, or the inadequate processing of that which is covered,[5] have tended to suggest that television is a less reliable source of such information than newspapers. The emergence of agenda setting studies, and the impressive set of field and empirical studies reported by Iyengar and Kinder,[6] provide evidence which suggests that for some issues, television news is a significant political influence. Not only does television coverage of government help to determine the relative salience of issues, but attention to the political actors responsible for government performance, helps to prime voters to evaluate the performance of particular politicians and government in general.

A number of published studies explore the influence of political interest and involvement as an important intervening variable which helps to explain differences in political knowledge (sophistication), attitudes and opinions.

Iyengar and Kinder suggest that "events that weaken partisanship, interest , and participation reduce the resources the public could otherwise draw upon to resist television news's influences."[7] As a result, the mass media increase in importance as the source for information citizens use in their assessment of how well the government, including elected representatives, are performing in their roles. The topics upon which the media focus are said to "prime" the audience for future considerations of the political realm, heightening the importance of particular issues and attributes upon which judgements are made. In a study which revisited some of the issues explored earlier by Iyengar and Kinder, Krosnick and Kinder[8] provide evidence which suggest that political "experts" were less susceptible to the influence of priming than were the "novices."

This finding is consistent with perspectives on media influence that suggests that those who are more knowledgeable, and more involved in particular issues are less dependent upon the mass media for the interpretation of data that they may already have. For example, Pierce and Lovrich[9] suggest that policy activists are far more knowledgeable than their contemporaries in the general public because "they have considerable incentive to obtain information as they try to affect policy relevant to their own goals. They need information in their communications designed to persuade, and they can gain information at relatively low cost from their participation in the political process."[10]

Involvement in organizations is thus a primary source of such issue-related information. Membership in organizations also increases the likelihood that one will participate in some informed interpersonal interaction around core issues. Cecilie Gaziano[11] has examined participation in neighborhood organizations as a source of information relative to community issues. This participation, however, was not seen to be sufficient to overcome the contribution of education to persistent knowledge gaps between individuals. John Green and James Guth[12] also emphasize the role of activists in the political process, suggesting that "activists help make representative democracy possible on a large scale, allowing the public opportunities to check the behavior of elected officials, if not to provide instruction on their preferences."[13] In their study, political activists were identified on the basis of their having contributed funds to one or more of some 60 party, ideological and interest group PACs as reported in Federal Election Commission records.

They reported that ideological measures are more consistent predictors of support for school prayer for the activists than for the less politically involved.

Political Self Identification

With the growth of lobbying and issue politics, political party identification has become a less reliable index of political orientation. No clear alternative has presented itself. Pamela Conover and Stanley Feldman[14] examined the use of the liberal/conservative designation as construct in the study of mass electorates. The assumption generally made by researchers using the measure is that the terms anchor ends of a bipolar scale. Other investigators have claimed that rather than being a continuum, liberalism and conservatism represent ideal types, and individuals base their self-identification upon their images of representatives of those types. That is, persons who indicate that they are liberal, are likely to have generally positive images of liberal political figures. Thus, the evaluation of liberalism is socially constructed, and as such, the utility of such self identification may vary with the political climate in which political figures identified as liberal or conservative have been represented in the press.

Somewhat in advance of the last election, John Fleishman[15] sought to test the "salience hypothesis" which suggests that because it is subject to influence by political events, ideological thinking is relatively less important than previously held. A finding of relative stability in ideological self-identification, in the face of the explicitly more ideological Reagan campaign suggests that personal ideology is a more stable construct. The data in Fleishman's study are consistent with the view that interest in politics seems to foster consistency in ideological self-identification, as does educational attainment[16].

Jerome Himmelstein and James McRae[17] suggest that liberalism appears to increase with education, but, in general, measures of socioeconomic status are rather unreliable predictors of positions on social issues. Because of their preference for interpreting education as a status attainment measure, rather than a set of experiences which "produces" a particular policy orientation, they suggest treating education as an index of key markers acquired. They suggest that "the early years of education, as seen in those whose education stops at those early levels, tends to inculcate allegiance to the status quo, while further education tends to reduce conservatism, probably by cultivating a more critical stance."[18] This suggests that the influence of education is curvilinear, with the liberalizing influence emerging at the higher levels of educational attainment.

Tom Smith's[19] comprehensive review of trends in political development suggest that the American population has tended to move in a liberal direction, although this movement has not been smooth, nor has it advanced at the same rate for all social and behavioral issues. The 60s was identified as a period of rapid liberalization, with the decade of the 70s marking a slowing, and even some reversals of the progress. Smith's analysis was based on questions asked regularly in the General Social Survey, the American National Election Studies, and several others identified through public opinion research centers. Unlike others to be discussed, Smith's time series analysis was based on a classification of responses to issues, rather than a report of respondent's self identification as liberal or conservative. John Robinson and John Fleishman[20] provide a more measurement-based assessment of these trends.

Robinson and Fleishman note the difficulties which are introduced as different polling organizations asked the political identification question somewhat differently over the years. Their solution to the measurement problem is a constructed conservative/liberal ratio. Their analysis finds a conservative shift consistent with the plateau suggested by Smith, with the conservative/liberal ratio rising from .96 in 1974 to 1.46 in 1986. The trend toward greater conservatism[21] was seen to be stronger among respondents who reported an interest in politics.

What ideological self identification actually means to respondents is a subject of some controversy. It is suggested that the strongest correlations with social issues is in relation to those with a moral basis, frequently associated with sexual relations. Still, as Robinson and Fleishman suggest[22], ideological position is a better predictor of policy preferences and electoral votes than is political party membership.

Personality Factors

Mallory Wober[23] has consistently challenged the findings of cultivation research on the basis of an observed relationship between measures of personality and measures of television viewing as well as attitudes or impressions of the "mean world" which have previously been specified as a cultivation effect. Wober's analyses suggest that when the psychological measures are controlled statistically, the influence of television viewing shrinks into insignificance, suggesting that the relationship is spurious. A particularly powerful explanatory relationship has been observed for measures which differentiate between internal and external locii of control (Rotter), where individuals who see control as being external, tend also to see the world as a "mean" and dangerous environment. These same individuals tend to be the heavier viewers of television.

It is perhaps not surprising that researchers have pursued the linkage between particular personality types and traditional measures of political ideology.[24] Milton Rokeach's "value pluralism" model, which is based upon the relative emphasis that individuals place on the terminal values of freedom and equality, underlies their particular ideological positions. [25] The higher correlation of the attitude/personality measures understandably results in a reduced contribution of television viewing as an independent explanatory variable. In the absence of time lagged correlations however, the causal direction cannot be unequivocally established.

Gender and Politics

Research has consistently reported differences between men and women in terms of their interest in, awareness of, and positions held on a variety of political issues. Some of these differences are explained in terms of differential political socialization.[26] Robert Shapiro and Harpreet Mahajan[27] stimulated, perhaps by recogition of the growing "gender gap" which emerged following the first Reagan administration, explored the differences between men and on a variety of policy issues. With the increased importance of political participation of women around issues such as abortion, political observers have come to understand that the gender gap may have electoral consequences. One category examined in their meta-analysis is that of regulation and protection. Shapiro and Mahajan find large gender differences in support for policies which "regulate and protect consumers, citizens and the environment," as well as with what they call the "compassion issues" through which government provides assistance to those in need. It is also noted that the gender differences in the areas of regulation and compassion tended to increase between 1972 and 1983.

Research Questions

Doris Graber suggests that "we need to fathom media impact on the climate of opinion in which democracy thrives or languishes."[28] We suggest that this climate of opinion has at its core the public's sense of confidence in its government. In addition, the willingness of citizens to participate in the policy process through direct involvement in constituent groups and issue-based organizations has the potential to reduce the inequity between individual citizens and the corporations which have become increasingly active in the political sphere.[29] Thus it is critical for us to explore the role of the mass media in contributing to both trust in government as well as a willingness to take an active role in governance. This study seeks to determine the contribution that media use makes to citizens' trust in government and their willingness to take an active role in governing themselves.

Methodology

Data for this analysis were obtained from a national telephone survey of adults administered in January and February 1989 by professional interviewers[30] as part of a study of public orientations toward privacy. [31]The computer-assisted interviewing program(CATI) facilitated the random ordering of items within sets of measures. This randomization is thought to reduce the influence of question order. However, it would soon have become clear to any participant that the survey was about privacy and policies regarding personal information. Sensitivity about the privacy issue may limit the generality of findings about government performance in general.

The following variables have been selected to represent the constructs of greatest importance to this analysis. Two dependent variables have been selected for this analysis. The first, an attitudinal measure (GOVTRUST) assigns responses to a five point Likert type scale. Individuals were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement "The government can generally be trusted to look out for my interests." Nonresponses (less than 1%) were assigned to the middle category when strongly agree=6 and strongly disagree=10. The second dependent measure is an additive index (ACTIVISM, Alpha=.689) reflecting the extent of respondent political involvement. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following they had done with regard to a social problem, a political issue, or on behalf of a political candidate: 1) marched or demonstrated, 2) signed a petition, 3) written a letter, 4) attended a meeting, 5) joined an organization, 6) donated money, or 7) tried to get more information.

For the demographic variables, three measures have been included. Gender is measured as a dichotomous variable (male=1, female=2). Age is measured as a continuous variable reported as years, gathered in response to the question "how old were you at your last birthday?" Education was measured by an eight step ordinal scale based on the response to the question, "what was the last grade of school you completed?"

Two personality measures have been included which assess the extent to which respondents feel powerless. Both are measured as as five item Likert type scales, with non-response coded as the middle category, and strong agreement=6 and strong disagreement=10. The first measure which requires a judgement about the nature of power (KNOWCTRL) asks about respondent agreement with the statement "The more people know about you, the more control they have over your life." The second measure is a more personal assessment of powerlessness (POWERADV) based on agreement with the statement "People with power take advantage of people like me."

Two measures of ideological position are included. One is the traditional measure of ideological self identification (POLISELF) which asks respondents to describe their political orientation on a scale from 1-10, where 1=conservative and 10=liberal. The second is a measure based on the Rokeach Terminal values[32] Freedom and Equality, expressed as the ratio of Freedom to Equality. Based on the traditional identification of conservatives as valuing freedom(liberty) over equality, the more conservative the respondent, the more the ratio exceeds 1.0. Interest in politics (INTRPOLI) is measured by a scale which ranges from 1-10, where 1=not at all interested, and 10=very interested "in politics, government, or public affairs."

Three different measures of media use are included. General television use (AVGHRSTV) is a continuous measure (to the quarter hour) based on the response to the question "What is the average number of hours that you watch television on a typical weekday." A more selective television measure (WATCHPOL) is a four point ordinal scale ranging from 1=never to 4=frequently on the basis of responses to the question, "Within the last six months, how often did you watch programs on television having to do with politics, government, or public affairs?" The final exposure measure was an ordinal measure of attention to politics in print (READPOLI) which ranged from 1=none to 4=quite a bit, in response to the question "When you read the papers, how much attention do you pay to stories about politics, government or public affairs?"

The analytical approach selected for this study was hierarchical regression. Variables were entered into the equations in conceptual blocks, and in an order reflecting a particular causal argument. With GOVTRUST as the criterion variable, the demographic variables were entered as the first block. The second block introduced the two personality or social orientation variables. The third block introduced the ideological measures, followed by a single entry measuring interest in politics. The media exposure variables were entered last. In the second analytical model, where ACTIVISM was the dependent, GOVTRUST was entered last as it was assumed to be influenced by all the other measured variables.

Findings

Respondents indicated a moderately high level of interest in politics with a mean of 7.1 on a ten point scale (2.5 standard deviation). Attention to news and public affairs on television or in the press was somewhat lower. Twenty-four percent of respondents indicated that they rarely or never watched television programs dealing with politics, government or public affairs. A similar proportion (21%) reported that they paid very little attention to such matters when they read the papers.

The extent of activism in the population was quite varied. The activity reported most frequently was the search for additional information about social problems or political issues (55%) Signing petitions was the next most popular form of participation, with 50% reporting having signed at least one petition within the past year. Under five percent reported having taken to the streets and marched or demonstrated. Figure One presents activism as measured by the sum of activities reported for each respondent.

Table One presents the results of the hierarchical regressions. The first regression, where GOVTRUST is the criterion variable is statistically significant at an appropriately conservative level (p,.001), but the adjusted r-square suggests that only three percent of the variance is explained by the measured variables.

The demographic block is significant, contributing approximately half of the explained variance (1.5%). Of the three variables, education is the only significant factor (beta=.12). The positive sign of the coefficient should be interpreted to mean that older respondents are less likely to agree that the government can be trusted to look out for their interests. The second block, containing measures of personality, or feelings of alienation or powerlessness, also makes a significant contribution, adding an additional 1.2% to explained variance. As measured, there is a barely significant tendency for people who believe that knowledge facilitates control to also lack confidence in government (beta=-.08). None of the variables in the third or fourth blocks, measuring the contribution of ideology and political interest, respectively, contribute much to the model, once we have controlled for demographics and personality.

The final block, containing three measures of media use, contributes an additional 1.1% to total explained variance. Of the three measured variables, only our measure of average television use is statistically significant. The coefficient (-.095) should be interpreted to mean that as non-specific television viewing increases, people tend to be more confident about government performance.

The second equation examines the relationship of these predictors to the level of participation (ACTIVISM) in the political process. Here we find a highly significant model explaining more than 28% of the variance in the criterion variable. In the first block, age is still marginally significant (beta=.061), but education emerges as the most powerful demographic predictor (beta=.33), suggesting that participation increases with educational attainment. Together, age and education explain more than a third of the total variance explained by the model.

The second block again makes a significant contribution to r-square (1.9%), but this time, the most important factor (beta=.15) is the measure of powerlessness, where those who participate more tend to deny the powerful any dominion over their own lives. Again, participation appear not to be the province of any ideological persuasion, as the third block does not make any significant contribution to r-square. As we would expect, interest in politics, as measured in the third block, contributes the greatest amount to r-square (11.3%), even after controlling for age, education and self-efficacy. The more respondents were interested in politics, the more they pursued that interest through a variety of specific activities.

In the fifth block, where we enter the media variables, we find that the two variables which assess exposure and attention to public affairs material are both statistically significant, and contribute approximately 3% to r-square. Of the two, attention to public affairs material in the newspaper is the more powerful predictor (beta=.18).

In the final block, we enter GOVTRUST, the criterion variable of the first model. The zero order correlation of GOVTRUST and ACTIVISM is significant (r=.13), and as measured should be interpreted to suggest that activists are less confident that the government acts in their interest. Because only 3% of the variance in GOVTRUST was explained by the other measured variables, it was expected that it would still have something to contribute to our understanding of political participation. Entered in this way, GOVTRUST contributes an additional 1.7% to r-squared.

Discussion

Contrary to the findings of a great number of studies, gender was not an important predictor of trust in government or political activism. Age, however was a significant predictor in both models. When the relationship of age to trust in government was explored through an examination of the means of eight age cohorts, it becomes clear that it is primarily the older respondents, those perhaps more dependent upon government services, and less pleased with the quality of those services, that are the most likely to reject a pro-government stance. Fully 68% of those respondents 65 and older reject the claim that the government can be trusted with their interests, whereas less than 50% of those under 25 share that perspective.

Although it was not as powerful as was suggested by the work of Wober and others, the personality measures did make a significant contribution to variance in trust in government. Indeed, in the final solution, when all variables were in the equation, both personality measures were statistically significant, with nearly identical betas. Neither of the ideological measures were statistically significant. And while interpreting the beta coefficients in a model where several of the predictors share much of the variance in common is a highly risky activity, the measure based on the Rokeach values is relatively more important than the traditional ideological measure, approaching significance at the .10 level. This variable, which we recall measured the relationship between freedom and equality, can be seen to have a more direct relationship to assessments of government than the liberal/conservative dimension which has been seen to vary with the issues under discussion.

Interest in politics appears unrelated to one's confidence in government. Indeed, it is general television viewing, rather than exposure to explicitly political material which accounts for most of the remaining variance explained by the model. This finding may be interpreted as supportive of the cultivation hypothesis.[33] Consistent with the general hegemonic assumptions of the model, after controlling for demographics and personality, those who watch more television, tend to be more trustful of government.

These same variables are substantially more successful in explaining the variance in political activism. Education appears to generate a sense of confidence in a person's ability to act in their own interest. Thus, we note that those with more education are more likely to reject expressions of powerlessness (r=.24), while the powerlessness measure retains its value as in independent predictor of activism. Those who reject powerlessness as a personal orientation, after controlling for education, are more politically active. Again, it is clear that political activism is not the province of those on the Left or the Right. While in the earlier stages of the analysis it appeared that the traditional measure of political self identification was more powerful than the Rokeach measure, controlling for political interest reduced those measures to equivalence. We may take this as a good sign for the American democracy. Whereas Noelle-Neuman's[34] work might suggest that liberals would be less likely to express their views during a period of rising conservatism, we may interpret these data as suggesting that liberals have not withdrawn entirely. Of course, what is needed before much can be made of this finding, is data from earlier and later historical periods.

We would suggest that the finding of a significant positive relationship between activism and attention to politics in the press, even after controlling for interest in politics, is also a good sign. Rather than contributing to a sense of malaise, we may interpret these data as suggesting that the press provides sufficient feedback, perhaps evidence of political efficacy, which maintains the active interest and participation of some portion of the population. Perhaps the most heartwarming discovery for those who believe that grassroots participation is the essence of democracy, is revealed in the significant contribution of our measure of trust in government. After controlling for all the measured variables, including education, political interest and media use, we still find an independent contribution associated with GOVTRUST. And, it is important to note that it is those who have the least confidence in government, who are the most active. Thus we might characterize activists as people who are well educated, not particularly constrained by ideological position, still interested in politics, and because their tracking of government in the press, and through other direct and indirect sources of information, suggests that government is not performing as they believe it should, they take matters into their own hands and become involved. Of course, this recursive structuring of the process of political activation oversimplifies the interactions between activity and consciousness which Anthony Giddens theorizes as structuration,[35] but the signs are positive!

Figure One

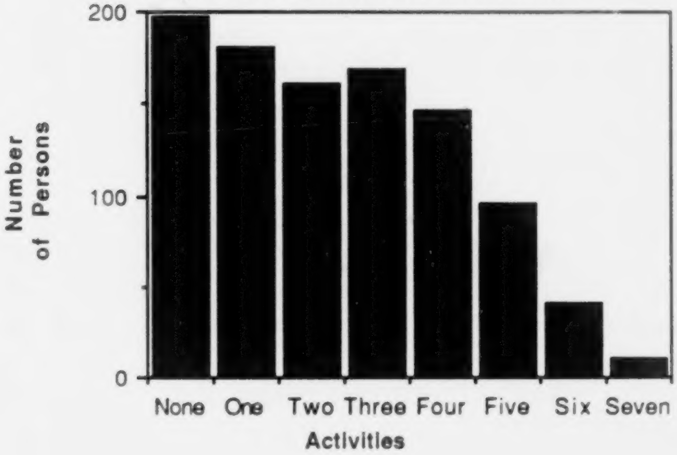
Reported Number of Activities
200
100
0
Number of Persons
None
One
Two
Three
Four
Five
Six
Seven
Activities

TABLE ONE
Political Trust and Activism
Hierarchical Regression

Predictors	Criterion Variables (Betas at entry)	
	GOVTRUST	ACTIVISM
Block 1		
Age	.120***	.061*
Sex	-.001	-.011
Education	.035	.325***
Rsq Change	.015**	.107***
Block 2		
Knowctrl	-.077*	-.010
Poweradv	-.065	.145***
Rsq Change	.012**	.019***
Block 3		
Poliself	.018	.059
Ideology	.049	-.031
Rsq Change	.003	.005
Block 4		
Intrpoli	-.016	.352***
Rsq Change	.000	.113***
Block 5		
Avghrstv	-.095**	-.033
Watchpol	.020	.077*
Readpoli	.054	.178***
Rsq Change	.011*	.030***
Block 6		
Govtrust		.134***
Rsq Change		.017***
Adjusted R Square	.030***	.282***

*=p<.05; **=p<.01; ***=p<.001

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[1] Michael A. Milburn provides a comprehensive review of recent studies in his chapter on "the mass media and public opinion" pp 131-151 in his Persuasion and Politics. The Social Psychology of Public Opinion. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1991.

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ABSTRACT

CORPORATIONS, THE NEWS MEDIA AND OTHER VILLAINS WITHIN JACKSON'S RHETORICAL VISION

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Linda Florence Callahan
The Ohio State University
School of Journalism
242 W. 18th Ave.
Columbus, OH 43210-1107
Phone 614-292-7438

Bormann's fantasy-theme analysis method was used to discover the villains within Jesse Jackson's rhetorical vision. In other words, who does Jackson perceive at the "bad guys" and why?

The study began with an analysis of almost 40 of Jackson's speeches, sermons and articles that were presented over a ten-year period from 1976-1986 in an effort to discover the character themes within his discourse. The themes presented most often are considered of greatest importance within one's world view. People talk about what is on their minds. The primary villainous characters were large corporations, the government, the Democratic and Republican parties, Bakke and Bakkeism, Ronald Reagan, and the news media.

This study should be of interested to members of the groups discussed here or to anyone interested in the American economic and political process. Since Jackson received such a high percentage of the African American vote in his presidential primary bids, it is reasonable to assume that many of his supporters make up his rhetorical community. If this is the case, this research would suggest that there are still large segments of the population who feel that their voices and concerns are still going unheard.

CORPORATIONS, THE NEWS MEDIA AND OTHER VILLAINS WITHIN JACKSON'S RHETORICAL VISION

INTRODUCTION

When we read a drama, watch a movie or even recall people we knew from our past, we describe them in "good guy" versus "bad guy" terms. An individual might be viewed as a good person with a few flaws or a bad person with some positive traits. Or still yet, from our vantage point, a character might be placed squarely into the good or the evil category. Little Red Riding Hood was good and the big bad wolf was evil.

We make sense out of the world by assigning motives. Bormann (1983) argues that "there is a human tendency to try to understand events in terms of people with certain personality traits and motivations, making decisions, taking actions, and causing things to happen" (p. 436). When we interpret events in terms of human action, "it allows us to assign responsibility, to praise or blame, to arouse and propitiate guilt, to hate and love" (Bormann, 1983, p. 436).

This study identifies the villains found within Jesse Jackson's world view and it analyzes and explains the basis for his definitions.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes Bormann's fantasy theme analysis method. This critical rhetorical method first appeared in scholarly literature in the early 1970s (Bormann, 1972). Since that time, the method has been "the theme of convention programs, colloquies in our national professional journals, term papers, and theses and dissertations" (Golden, Berquist & Coleman, 1983. p. 431). The independent application of the method has been employed in a wide range of areas (Cragan and Shields) "Typically, application has been to speeches, Presidential campaigns, social movements, and organizational structures" (Covert, 1984. p. 24).

The method allows the critic to discover the fantasies or visions of groups or individuals through an analysis of the manifest content of their rhetoric. After the discourse is analyzed, it is coded systematically in order to determine the frequency with which the character themes appear. Those characters appearing most frequently are considered of greatest importance within one's rhetorical vision.

Procedures

Since the thirty-six speeches and articles for analysis were taken from Jesse L. Jackson: Straight from the Heart (Hatch and Watkins, 1987) a method of distinguishing speeches within the text was devised.

The first speech was referenced as "speech 1," the second speech was referenced as "speech 2," and so forth through all of the discourse. After a reference is made within the text, it is followed as such: (Sp. 1, p. 5) indicates that the reference was taken from Speech One, and appears on page five. Similarly, the reference (Sp. 2, p. 20) indicates that the reference was taken from Speech Two and appears on page twenty, and (Sp. 3, p. 35).

The name of the speech, the date it was given, and/or occasion for the speech is listed in Appendix A.

RESULTS

Six primary villainous characters were discovered within Jackson rhetorical vision. Five of the six characters are discussed here. The characters are large corporations, the government, the Democratic and Republican parties, Bakke and Bakkeism and the news media. The sixth character, Ronald Reagan, is dicussed in a forthcoming article.

Large Corporations

Large corporations are viewed as villains who are so driven by greed that the well-being of the employees, the community and even the well-being of the nation are sacrificed. In addition to sacrificing jobs and exploiting workers in general, corporations are also viewed as villainous characters because they systematically and institutionally exploit the African-American community by continually taking from but never reinvesting in the community.

While many white blame people of color and reverse discrimination for the loss of jobs, Jackson explained that jobs are not going to people of color, but are going to cheap labor markets overseas. Multinational corporations are "expending capital and moving plants and jobs to foreign cheap labor markets in the automobile, textile, rubber, shoe, and electronics industries" (Sp. 33, p. 294). And baseballs that used to be made in upstate New York are now manufactured in Haiti, where workers are paid twenty-five cents per day (Sp. 33, p. 294).

Similarly, Goodyear left Akron to take advantage of the cheap "slave-labor market" in Chile (Sp. 35, p. 314). For instance, in 1978, Jackson recalled that Goodyear announced that it was ending production in Akron, and one month later, announced that it was investing $34 million in a new tire plant--employing 2,000 people in Chile (Sp. 35, p. 314).

Thus, Jackson concluded that no one is served by the nation's current foreign policies except the multinational corporations. He explained:

> It does not serve the people of this country. It does not serve the people of other lands. It runs the risk of war in countries around the world where people are rising up against exploitation and oppression. It put our nation on the wrong side of history. It drains our nation's resources into military adventures abroad, when we so desperately need to be increasing our own security at home by rebuilding our cities, our roads, and our bridges, putting our people to work, educating our children, cleaning up our environment (Sp. 35, p. 314).

While fully cognizant of the fact that businesses must profit to stay in business, Jackson believes that large corporations have a moral and social responsibility to treat workers fairly and with dignity. "All those who work are entitled to a livable wage in return for their labor . . ." (Sp. 32. p. 285). And in the United States, the large corporations have an additional moral and social responsibility to employees, not only because of the many years that workers invested to make the companies what they are today, but, because of the many tax incentives and various subsidies that taxpayers' monies financed. "You built these industries with your sweat and blood and tears" (Sp. 35, p. 312), Jackson told an Akron, Ohio audience in 1984. After profiting from the workers' labor, the corporations then abandoned the city---leaving behind a shrinking tax base that could no longer meet the needs of the people. And after receiving tax breaks, the corporations, instead of reinvesting in American industry, bought other industries, merged with one another, and moved to slave labor markets abroad (Sp. 35, p. 312).

Citing Chrysler as an example of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, Jackson reminded listeners that while many boast of the Chrysler bail-out as a great success, many forgot the workers who gave up one billion dollars in concession and the taxpayers who paid another billion dollars. "And now Chrysler is making record profits--$705 million in the first three months of this year (1984). The directors are setting aside $51.6 million in bonuses for more than 1,400 executives, and Lee Iacocca is talking about buying a bank" (Sp. 35, p. 313). As a result of the bail out, "The stockholders are happy. The executives are happy. But what happened to the workers" (Sp. 35, p. 313), Jackson questioned? He pointed out that while Chrysler did not have to begin paying taxes until 1985, the workers receiving unemployment checks had to pay taxes on their benefits while trying to make their house payments.

Jackson proclaimed that rural America also faces similar problems as those confronting urban communities. While the cities were being turned into "graveyards" as companies moved over seas, a record number of farms were also going broke due to government policies which enabled more and more agricultural conglomerates to gobble up profits. The irony of the "absurd" economic system is that "our food producers are going broke because they are producing too much food in a world full of hungry people" (Sp. 32, p. 284).

Citing a series of statistics to shed light on the irony, Jackson reported that between 1972 and 1975, the consumer price index for food went up 48 percent, while the amount Americans were paying for food that actually went to farmers increased by only 8 percent. These facts show that both the consumers and the farmers were getting a "raw deal" (Sp. 32 p. 284). He said that the farmers lost. The consumers lost, but the large corporations made huge profits.

While rural and urban workers are exploited by large corporations, African Americans are faced with an additional problem of being denied opportunities in the private economy. "If you think the baseball lock-out of Jackie Robinson was immoral and foolish, the industrial lock-out and rejection of the [B]lack American economic market and its potential for development is absolute economic nonsense" (Sp. 31, p. 279).

While growing up, Jackson informed listeners that African Americans were not allowed to own shoe shine stands at the train station, could wait tables but could not sit at them, and could not borrow money to build a competing establishment (Sp. 30, p. 265). Until 1967, he pointed out that there had never been more than a couple of African American car dealerships, because the automobile industry's policy did not allow African Americans to invest in or learn to run car dealerships (Sp. 30, p. 264). While African Americans today are given an opportunity to excel in sports, there are no African American baseball managers and no African American professional football coaches (Sp. 30, p. 273). Similarly, Jackson noted that in a population of thirty million, there is no reason why there are only two African American beverage bottling franchises, and that similar patterns exist in most other industries. This shortage and absence of African American management and ownership positions are not explainable by a lack of talent, ambition, money, or willingness to take risks since many African Americans possess all of these qualities.

He said that corporations continue to relate to African Americans as "essentially consumers and workers," but never as copartners in development, production, ownership, and shared wealth" (Sp. 31, p. 278).

Jackson described the African American economy as "an unexplored treasure chest in a wrecked ship that now must be opened, inspected, and liberated" (Sp. 31, p. 278). The market represents:

- o Twenty-six to 30 million people;
- o Seventeen million eligible voters;
- o Thirty million dollars per month paid in union dues.
- o Millions of dollars contributed to pension funds;
- o Billions of dollars paid in local, state, and federal taxes;
- o A $145 billion English-speaking consumer market immediately accessible;
- o The most educated minds and the best trained labor force of any developing nation in the world;
- o A link and a bridge to the markets of other nonwhite developing economies (e.g., a half-billion Africans) (Sp. 31, p. 278).

He said that neither Russia nor China--nor both of them combined--does $145 billion of business with corporate America. "Therefore, we must not only use our seventeen million eligible votes to cast a ballot every two or four years, but we must vote for dignity everyday with our dollars" (Sp. 31, p. 278).

Jackson noted that corporate America has procurement contracts and services it renders, and African American have productive capabilities, labor, and consumer dollars. This combination, provides a basis for renegotiating a new understanding and economic relationship around mutually beneficial economic needs and interests. African Americans pay taxes and have a right to share in the $3 trillion private economy and a $750 billion public economy (Sp. 31, p. 278).

The trade imbalance resulting from the one-way trade relationship has caused African Americans to suffer from a budget deficit. Historically, Jackson remarked that African Americans have had a free-trade policy, and did not put up trade barriers or import restrictions in the community (Sp. 31, p. 278-279). But corporate America took advantage of the free-trade policy as African Americans traded with them and helped to develop their businesses, but they refused to trade with and help develop African Americans businesses (Sp. 31, p. 278-279).

The Government

The government is seen as possessing both honorable and villainous characteristics. Although Jackson professes to be as "unimpressed with boundless liberalism" as he is with "heartless conservatism," he said, "We cannot be blindly antigovernment (Sp. 30, p. 262). After all, "the government is more likely to share and serve the real needs of people than is big business because the purpose of government is to serve all of the people" (Sp. 4, p. 41). "The public's challenge is to pressure government into being democratic enough to live up to its highest and best potential" (Sp. 4, p. 41).

Jackson noted that the government has made significant interventions in many areas for the common good of the nation. For example:

> Without public schools, most Americans would not be educated. Without land-grant colleges, the United States would not have the number-one agricultural system in the world. Without federal transit programs, we would not have an interstate highway system. Without subsidized hospitals, most Americans could not afford decent medical care. And the government has played a significant role in providing a base for many American industries. The defense industries, for example, may be considered private, . . . but many of them are almost wholly supported by government contracts (Sp. 30, p. 262).

Spending these public monies is considered in the national interest as was the United States' investment in rebuilding Europe under the Marshall Plan after World War II. The Marshall Plan was a comprehensive long-term program. However, had the plan been a five-year investment as was the War on Poverty program, Europe would have collapsed (Sp. 30, p. 262). But it did not collapse and the United States determined that the redevelopment of Europe was in the best interest of this country (Sp. 30, p. 262).

These are examples of how vigorous government investments made something positive happen. However, because there is a negative predisposition toward the poor in this country, Jackson said, "when we shift from the notion of subsidy as something that serves our national interest, to that of welfare, the attitudes suddenly shift from positive to negative" (Sp. 30, p. 262). "We must learn to see the development of people who are poor as in our national interest, as cost-efficient, as an investment that can bring an enormous return to every American" (Sp. 30, p. 262).

Hunger and malnutrition in a wealthy nation do not just happen--"they are caused." Jackson cited a study by the Harvard School of Public Health concluded that "hunger has returned to America as a direct result of conscious government policies" (Sp. 32, p. 287). "As the economy weakened, as unemployment increased, as poverty rose . . ., as the needs of the American people increased--our government turned its back on our most needy, helpless, and vulnerable citizens" (Sp. 32, p. 287). "Hunger has returned because the very programs which once virtually eliminated it were weakened and cut at the time they were needed the most (Sp. 32, p. 287).

Government should play a major role in the service and development of people. But in many cases, people are poor because of government (Sp. 30, p. 263). For example, the current welfare program perpetuates poverty, and "[w]hen a nation is 51-percent female yet [women] can't get an equal rights amendment passed; when many women still cannot borrow money with the same freedom men can, cannot pursue their ideas and aspirations in the same marketplace because they are not equally protected--that amounts to government interference, . . . on the side of the status quo" (Sp. 30, p. 263). Additionally, Many people of color cannot borrow money from banks, on subjective ground--because some bank officials do not like their color, or because whole neighborhoods are red-lined so that money will not be loaned to anyone living there (Sp. 30, p. 263).

Instead of maintaining the status quo, the government must be committed to vigorous enforcement of equal protection under the law and other basic principles. Without that enforcement, Jackson argued, "it is not a government hand-out that's the issue as much as it is the government's shoving people into a hole and not letting them out." Similarly, "When Legal Aid is cut, and the poor no longer have access to the courts, that's an example of government playing a role in perpetuating poverty" (Sp. 30, p. 263).

Democratic and Republican Parties

Just as the government is not envisioned by Jackson as an absolute villain without any redeeming qualities, the Democratic and Republican parties are also perceived as villainous characters, but possessing some positive traits. The Democratic Party, for example, was described by Jackson as "the best hope for redirecting our nation on a more humane, just, and peaceful course" (Sp. 1, p. 3). Although the party is not perfect, Jackson said that the party was called to a "perfect mission: to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to teach the illiterate, to provide jobs for the jobless, and to choose the human race over the nuclear race" (Sp. 1, p. 3). What is more, members of the party had gathered (in the national convention setting) to nominate a candidate and to write a platform which would serve to expand, unify, direct, and inspire the party and nation to fulfill the noble mission (Sp. 1, p. 3).

Similarly, the Republican Party, after inviting Jackson to speak before the Republican National Committee in 1978, was said by Jackson to be "embarking on a new program to open its doors to greater participation by Black Americans," and that the invitation to speak before the party's leadership was also an indication of the party's, "willingness to listen and a desire to respond to our needs" (Sp. 3, p. 23).

However, in Jackson's view, both parties have many shortcomings, such as the Democratic Party taking the African American vote for granted, and the Republican Party writing off the African American vote all together--resulting in both parties being unresponsive to the needs and concerns of the community. Jackson explained:

> The Democrats have no incentive to register us because we already comprise one-fourth of their total vote, and they are afraid we will vote [B]lack. The Republicans feel that they have no incentive to register [B]lacks because we tend to vote Democratic. Many of the same people who opposed our right to vote also oppose our being fully registered to vote" (Sp. 3, p. 25).

"For Democrats, race is increasingly becoming a litmus test and the central threat to the viability of the party" (Sp. 6, p. 64). For instance, "Black Democrats have won primaries in South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, California, and Chicago, yet significant numbers of white Democratic leaders and voters are choosing to support white Republicans over [B]lack Democrats" (Sp.

6, p. 64). Jackson maintained, "If [B]lack people and their leaders support Democrats without regard to race, but others cannot reciprocate, then the character and viability of the party must be called into question" (Sp. 6, p. 64).

Using a sports analogy, Jackson argued that it is not enough for the Democrats to win. The whole team, including African Americans and the rejected, must win. In order for the team to win, "everyone must help prepare the game plan (party policy), and be in the huddle when the plays (platform) are called" (Sp. 6, p. 67). He pointed out, "The Democratic Party cannot make policy and write the platform without the serious involvement of [B]lacks at every level and then ask [B]lacks merely to sit in the stand and enthusiastically cheer the conference representative to victory (i.e. vote Democratic in the general election) (Sp. 6, p. 67). Despite the large number of African Americans in the Democratic Party and despite years of loyalty as a group, Jackson contended that African Americans have party membership but do not "share proprietorship in the party--and investors without equity reap no dividends" (Sp. 6, p. 67).

Because [B]lacks deliver large numbers of votes to candidates and parties that are unresponsive, Jackson acknowledged that many African Americans are now disappointed and have become disillusioned with the voting process.

Twenty years ago, there were no [B]lacks in Congress or in statewide office in the nine southern states where 53 percent of the Blacks live, and twenty years later, there are still none, because "the Voting Rights Act has been sabotaged. . . . reduced to an Indian treaty--an unfulfilled law" (Sp. 2, p. 20). Jackson argued that the Democratic Party is "violating the law," and that the Republican Party is not enforcing it. "We 'are still looking for allies who will be fair as our struggle shifts from welfare to our share--from aid to trade, from social generosity to economic reciprocity" (Sp. 2, p. 20).

Jackson declared that the fundamental relationship between African Americans and the Democratic Party must be renegotiated. "[B]lacks and the Democratic Party must either reaffirm a covenant as, in their mutual best interest, or [B]lacks must find new ways to determine their destiny" (Sp. 6, p. 64).

Whether Republican or Democrat, Jackson believes that "mutual need is the basis of an alliance" (Sp. 3, p. 23). "[B]lack people need the Republican Party to compete for us so that we have a real alternative for meeting our needs" and the Republican Party needs African American votes. However, many Republicans assume that African Americans will not vote Republican. Jackson explained that African Americans will vote Republican, but often do not because the Republicans do not go after the African American vote. "Since 1964, with very few exceptions, the Republican party has turned its back on the [B]lack vote and [B]lack interests" (Sp. 3, p. 24). If the Republican Party is to attract African American voters, Jackson maintained that African Americans must be involved in the process of developing the political strategy to attract the vote. He insisted that "an all-white Republican national, state, and county leadership apparatus" will not attract African American voters (Sp. 3, p. 25). Additionally, Jackson listed prominent African American Republicans who worked through the ranks of the party, but are basically being ignored by the party. According to Jackson, only a serious genuine effort on the part of the Republican Party will result in effectively attracting African American voters.

African Americans have both a right and an obligation to expand their political options, and must exercise that right and obligation with regard to both the Republican and Democratic parties (Sp. 3 p. 24). And he urged African Americans to "pursue a strategy that prohibits one party from taking us for granted and another party from writing us off" (Sp. 3, p. 24).

Acknowledging that partisan politics has its place, Jackson said, "ultimately Democrats must be more concerned about democracy than the Democratic Party. And the Republican Party must be more concerned about the republic than the Republican Party" (Sp.3, p. 33). Beyond both Democrats and Republicans, "we need a new America, characterized more by ethical values than ethnic separation" (Sp. 3, p. 33). Jackson believes that there must be values that are held dear by all. "It doesn't matter whether the Democrats or the Republicans are holding the bucket if the bucket has a hole in the bottom" (Sp. 3, p. 34), Jackson concluded.

Bakke and Bakkeism

The frequency with which Jackson referred to "Bakke" and/or "Bakkeism"--thus indicating a significant character within Jackson's rhetorical vision. To Jackson, the court case and the subsequent publicity surrounding the case, came to personify the anti-affirmative action mood of the country.

Hatch and Watkins (1987) summarized the Alan Bakke court case in order to show how Bakke came to epitomize the "spirit of anti-affirmative action." They explained:

> Alan Bakke, who is White, applied to medical school at the University of California-Davis. As part of an affirmative action program, UC-Davis had set aside ten seats in each entering class for economically disadvantaged students. In the past all the seats had gone to minority students. Because a [B]lack student who entered in this way had scored lower on the medical-school aptitude tests, Bakke sued, arguing that he was the victim of 'reverse discrimination'.
>
> In July of 1978, a divided U.S. Supreme Court ordered Bakke admitted. They noted that racially conscious methods could be used in college admissions programs; this one, however, they found discriminatory and pointed to a plan used by Harvard that was not. Jackson uses the term "Bakkeism" to refer to the spirit of anti-affirmative action set loose in the country because of the massive publicity surrounding the case (p. 31).

Jackson, in a 1978 speech, insisted, African Americans were not making progress at the expense of whites, as news accounts tended to project. He said that there were 49 percent more whites in medical school then and 64 percent more whites in law school than at the beginning of the affirmative action programs some eight years earlier (Sp. 4, p. 40). Instead, Jackson argued, "Bakke and 'Bakkeism" is racism and a threat to our attempt to catch up and close the economic and educational gaps" which resulted from discrimination and the denial of opportunity (Sp. 4, p. 40). "If our goal is educational and economic equity and parity, and it is, then we need the assistance of affirmative action to catch up" (Sp. 4, p. 40), Jackson explained.

However, this should not be taken as an indication that African Americans oppose being judged on merit. To the contrary, Jackson pointed out that whites have resisted judging African Americans on merit--resulting in the equivalence of African Americans in the United States being born with demerits. Jackson explained that regardless of education level and/or economic status, all African Americans had to go to the back of the bus, could not vote, could not rent or buy a house in most neighborhoods, were not, and in many instance still are not, allowed to hold responsible positions because of race. "We were not enslaved and are not discriminated against today because, individually or collectively, we lack merit" (Sp. 4, p. 40). He argued that special laws such as the Voting Rights Act, Open Housing Act, the Brown vs Board of Education ruling, and affirmative action are need because African Americans are still trying to overcome the special problem of racism.

Jackson presented the analogy of two people in a one mile race. He said, "one starts off with a half-mile head start and one starts off at point zero--O.K., now let's take the chains off, every man for himself--well, such a race is not just. We are starting out behind" (Sp. 30, p. 275). Supporting his contention, Jackson reported:

> There is one white attorney for every 680 whites, one [B]lack attorney for every 4,000 [B]lacks; one white physician for every 649 whites, one [B]lack physician for every 5,000 [B]lacks; one white dentist for every 1,900 whites, one [B]lack dentist for every 8,400 [B]lacks. Less than 1 percent of all engineers are [B]lack. [B]lacks make up less than one percent of all practicing chemists (Sp. 4, p. 40).

Jackson added, "This nation went out of its way to enslave us as a group, but now wants to free us through individual merit. We need a solution that is consistent with and comprehensive of the problem" (Sp. 4, p. 40).

While "cruel and dispassionate injustice sets us back," Jackson proposes "creative justice and compassion" to close the gap between whites and people of color (Sp. 4, p. 40). But instead of "creative justice and compassion," African Americans are confronted with new forms of discrimination. With reference to the college entrance issue, Jackson maintained that "Bakke does not really challenge preferential treatment, for there is no challenge to the preferential treatment of children of the rich, of alumni, of the faculty, of athletes, or even the very talented--only minorities" (Sp. 4, p. 40).

Jackson believes that much of the controversy surrounding affirmative action over the last decade centered on several myths--with the most critical being that affirmative action was really 'discrimination in reverse' and that African Americans were making progress at the expense of whites. However, the facts continue to dispute the myths as the "discouraging record" of the state of

Illinois was documented in a study conducted by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Referencing the study, Jackson reported that the percentage of [B]lack students in Illinois medical and dental schools actually decreased since 1970 (Sp. 12, p. 107-108).

Citing the Association of American Medical Colleges, Jackson presented a similar national trend. As the total number of students entering medical schools increased, the percentage of African Americans decreased. Thus, Jackson concluded that the number of "whites placed" did not remain constant, but actually rose by 49 percent--indicating that "white access to medical training was not diminished but actually was substantially increased during the affirmative action years" (Sp. 12, p. 108).

In short, Jackson summarized, "the reality has been and continues to be contrary to the myth that affirmative action is allowing [B]lacks to make progress at white expense," (Sp. 8, p. 108). "While some may choose to use America's economic crisis as an occasion to use [B]lacks as scapegoats by attacking affirmative action," Jackson encouraged, "those concerned with dealing with reality would do well to keep the facts in mind" (Sp. 12, p. 108).

Jackson maintains that the only thing whites are giving up because of affirmative action is "an unfair advantage--something that was unnecessary in the first place." For example, he reminded audiences that preferential treatment for white males was the law, 250 years slavery was the law, another 100 years of segregation was the law, and de facto discrimination even today is the law of the culture (Sp. 14, p. 128). Therefore, he maintains that the issue is not reverse discrimination but the reversal of the effects of historic and present discrimination (Sp. 4, p. 40)

Jackson believes that African Americans have been "entrapped by Bakke and Bakkeism" and the "groundswell" of opposition to affirmative action (Sp. 3, p. 31). In addition to the 9.1 percent drop in the number of first year [B]lack medical students, Jackson said that the general policy and tendency toward exclusion is not only morally wrong but is economically more costly than is inclusion. Citing the Institute for Health Resources Development, Jackson pointed out that discrimination robs the nation of $13 billion annually (Sp. 3, p. 31).

Additionally, Jackson reminds audiences that education and employment cost less than ignorance and incarceration. For example, "If a young man or woman goes to any state university in this county for four years, it will cost less than $20,000. If he or she goes to any state penitentiary for four years, it will cost anywhere from $50,000 to $100,000" (Sp. 23, p. 198).

Summarizing his views on affirmative action, Jackson explained:

> Affirmative action is equal opportunity. It is not reverse discrimination. It is not preferential treatment. It is not for [B]lacks; it's for women and [B]lacks, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans--the locked-out. It does not require you to hire unqualified people; that's illegal. It has not taken white male jobs. Steel, electronics, rubber, textiles--those jobs didn't go to Watts and Harlem, they went to South Africa, Taiwan, South Korea, and slave-labor markets.
>
> Affirmative action does require you to include qualified [B]lacks, Hispanics, women, Asians, and Native Americans in the

> pool. We don't want any unqualified airline pilots. Affirmative action, with goals and timetables, does require you to measure your progress--or lack of it. Affirmative action with minimum quotas does require you to enforce the law. Democracy does not guarantee success, but it does guarantee opportunity (Sp. 14, p. 128).

Finally, Jackson made it clear that the news media was the primary culprit in spreading and perpetuating the myth of reverse discrimination. He said that Bakke filed and won his case because the mass media erroneously convinced whites that African Americans were making progress at whites expense rather than seeing racial reparations as in the national interest (Sp. 23, p. 197).

News Media

The media, while possessing some positive characteristics, were found wanting in two primary categories: 1) denying African Americans equal access within the profession--particularly within the higher ranking managerial positions, and; 2) distorting and deleting news affecting the African American community.

Naming the news media as an example of the institutional racism that exists within this country (Sp. 33, p. 296), Jackson said that African Americans find themselves in a country with the legal and constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press but without the actual power to exercise that right. In fact, Jackson argued that "journalism has used its power of appraisal to mentally disenfranchise [African Americans]" (Sp. 36, p. 318).

Jackson observed that the decision makers in television programming and news are white males with a suburban and an economic middle-to upper-middle-class mentality or -- bias (Sp. 36, p. 319).

"We don't approach equity in the mass media" (Sp. 3, p. 29), Jackson complained. Citing a study by the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Jackson (1978), reported that African Americans are still locked out of the top-level decision-making positions in the media. He added that only 2.7 percent of the department heads at stations surveyed by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights were African American (Sp. 3, p. 29).

Jackson cited similar findings that were reported in a California newspaper. Of the 133 executives at the three major networks, less than one percent was African American (Sp. 36, p. 319). Jackson said that the same pattern of opportunity denial was found in newspapers. For instance, of the 1,769 daily newspapers, there were only five or six African Americans in executive editorial positions, and out of 40,000 print journalists, only 1,700 (4 percent) were African American (Sp. 36, p. 319). Jackson concluded, "Presently, print journalism is saying, 'Do as I say, not as I do,' and the end product is hard to swallow" (Sp. 36, p. 319).

It was difficult for Jackson to accept because to him the major asset of journalists is "their believability---their ability to deal in truth with integrity and fairness" (Sp. 36, p. 319). "When journalists lose their moral authority, their believability, they have lost their most precious jewel" (Sp. 36, p. 319). "In materialistic terms," Jackson said, "their commodity is no longer salable" (Sp. 36, p. 319).

And yet, to a certain extent, Jackson believes, the news media have already lost much of their moral authority with the African American community. For example, "we have watched how the news media have twisted and perverted the issues relative to affirmative action, especially the Bakke case, using code words ('reverse discrimination,' 'preferential treatment,' 'quotas') to perpetuate myths rather than to inform the public with facts, . . ." (Sp. 36, p. 319-320). As a result of media insensitivity, Jackson maintained that "we are projected as impotent when we are important, and projected as liabilities when we are in fact assets" (Sp. 11, p. 98-99). Because of a loss of moral authority that resulted from the media's traditional pattern of deletions and distortions toward the African American community, many African Americans are very skeptical of news reports that criticize any member or any aspect of the community.

In addition to ignoring many activities that are of major import to the African Americans, Jackson, in various speeches, called attention to media distortions. In a 1980 address, he listed five "aggressive acts" in which he said the media constantly engages against the community:

> We are projected as (1) less intelligent than we are; (2) less hard-working than we are; (3) more violent than we are; (4) less patriotic than we are; and (5) less universal than we are.

> They do not call Senator Kennedy "white senator" or the president "white president" because the skin color is self-evident. When they refer to us as "[B]lack leaders," they are not describing our skin color, which is self-evident. They are defining our domain (Sp. 11, p. 99).

Expanded versions of this same argument were found in a number of his speeches. In a 1978 speech, on the issue of being limited to ethnic concerns instead of being perceived as universal persons, Jackson explained that the effect of constantly referring to "our leaders as 'black leaders' (rather than "leaders" whose blackness is self-evident)" keeps us in a "black box" rather than allowing us to speak and be heard on all issues as others are.

Jackson noted that television makes welfare, poverty, unemployment and African Americans synonymous (Sp. 36, p. 320). Yet, he emphasized that African Americans are primarily workers:

> We work longer, harder, and often, but not always at the most menial jobs, making less money than anyone. We are concentrated in the heavy-duty and certain service industries. We are 30 percent of the autoworkers, steel workers, and teamsters; 35 percent of public transportation and postal workers; and 40 percent of the hospital, sanitation, and laundry workers" (Sp. 36, p. 320).

Finally, in the 1981 address, Jackson expanded his point on African Americans being projected "as more violent than we are:

> We are projected as robbers, thugs, and rioters rather than as victims of reduced options. We are projected as terrorists rather than seen as trapped people who are victimized daily by institutional violence and who have had all other avenues of redressing our grievances stymied or cut-off (Sp. 8, p. 81).

Although there is no such thing as "objective" or "unbiased" reporting, Jackson believes that reporting should be fair. "Without fairness in the press, freedom of the press is limited in its vision" (Sp. 36, p. 318), Jackson explained. "Those coming closest to being objective and fair are those who are most aware of their biases" (Sp. 36, p. 318). Yet, Jackson has found that "journalists too often try to argue that they don't make value judgments or interpret the news, [that] they merely report the news---leaving the false impression of 'objectivity' or 'value-free' reporting" (Sp. 36, p. 321). However, Jackson insisted, that there is no such thing as value-free journalism. "Nonvalues are values, but they are the values of decadence and decay" (Sp. 36, p. 321). Jackson argued that journalism by its nature is "advocacy journalism." Thus, he maintained that journalists should make a conscious effort to become more aware of their own values and points of view (Sp. 36, p. 321).

Explaining that freedom and fairness should be seen within the context of the country's broad national objectives, Jackson listed a series of examples of value-laden and advocacy journalism:

> The news media made a judgment about McCarthyism in the 1950s. Journalism made a judgment about legal segregation in the South and decided that we should not, indeed could not, exist as a nation--half slaves half free. The news profession made a decision about Vietnam and about Watergate because it had a sense of the nation's objectives and what it ought to represent in the world (Sp. 36, p. 321).

Jackson realizes that advocacy journalism is possible because of the inherent power of the media in this country. In many ways, the media have the most fundamental power of all because they have the power of appraisal, that is, the power to determine priorities and establish what or who is important (Sp. 8, p. 81). In addition, "The news media--newspapers, radio, television, and movies--have replaced the religious institution, the home, and the school as the essential educator of our day" and "the news media have become the primary transmitter of information, folkways, mores, and cultural values" (Sp. 8, p. 81).

Despite the many shortcomings of the media, Jackson is a strong advocate of the "free press." "We fight for freedom of the press, fairness in the press, and for the future because of the broad national objectives of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all persons" (Sp. 36, p. 316), Jackson explained. "For the press, freedom is not simply a right and a privilege, it is a duty" because the media, more than any other institution, "are the trustees of the nation" (Sp. 36, p. 323).

Jackson stressed, "We must never allow the right to a 'free press' to become a cliche, to be taken for granted" (Sp. 36, p. 316). He added, "The price all of us must pay to protect this right is eternal vigilance" (Sp. 36, p. 316).

SUMMARY

An analysis of the character themes within the discourse revealed six villainous characters within Jackson's rhetorical vision. Five of the six characters were discussed here. The sixth character is discussed in a forthcoming article [redacted].

The five villains analyzed here were: large corporations, the government, the Democratic and Republican parties, Bakke/Bakkeism and the news media.

Large corporations were viewed negatively for being so driven by greed that the well-being of employees and the best interest of the nation are secondary. Bakkeism represented the anti-affirmative action mood of the country which is perpetuated by the myth that African Americans are making progress at the expense of whites.

The remaining three villains were viewed as having some positive attributes. The government was perceived negatively because of policies that perpetuate poverty and ~~the~~ deny equal opportunities for women and people of color. But the government was viewed positively for making interventions that were for the common good of the nation. The Democratic Party was praised as the best hope for re-directing the nation on a more humane course. The Republican Party was commended for beginning to allow more participation by African Americans. However, both parties were condemned for not addressing the needs and concerns of African Americans. Jackson argued that the Democrats took the African American votes for granted and the Republicans wrote off African Americans and did not pursue their votes.

The media were criticized for denying equal employment and promotion opportunities for people of color, for perpetuating negative stereotypes about African Americans, and for helping to create and perpetuating myths about Affirmative-Action and other issues that the hinders the progress of African Americans. The media were praised for "advocacy journalism" and for being "trustees of the nation." As trustees, Jackson urged the media to fight for a press that is free and fair in order to ensure that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are for all Americans.

This study should be of interest to members of the groups discussed here or to anyone interested in the American economic and political processes. Since Jackson received such a high percentage of the African American vote in his presidential primary bids, it is reasonable to assume that many of his supporters make up his rhetorical community. If this is the case, this research would suggest that there are still large segments of the population who feel that their voices and concerns are still being ignored.

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The Seven Dwarfs and Other Tales:
How the Press Covered the 1988 Democratic Primaries Without a Front-runner

By Thomas J. Johnson
Assistant Professor
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901

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ABSTRACT

Past studies of presidential elections which featured a clear front-runner indicate that the press based amount of coverage on perceived standing in the race and that candidates who did much better than expected received more positive coverage than did front-runners. This study of the 1988 Democratic primary, in which a front-runner did not emerge until late in the campaign, revealed a different pattern than earlier works. In the absence of a clear front-runner, the media gave similar amounts of coverage to all candidates actively campaigning for the nomination. However, prominence of coverage did appear to be based on perceived performance in the race as winners were the focus of more stories than also-rans. Finally, the press did not attack the front-runner as earlier studies have found. In fact, tone of coverage closely mirrored perceived performance of the candidates with the top contenders getting the most positive press. The press plays an important role in elections which lack a front-runner. The press helps establish the order of the candidates. Also, by giving largely favorable coverage to the nominal front runners who won particular races, the press may have reinforced opinions that these candidates were the most viable contenders for the nomination.

When Boston Globe political reporter Curtis Wilkie sat down to dinner with Washington Post columnist David Broder after a three-year stint in the Middle East, Wilkie asked the dean of the political pundits if he knew how the 1988 presidential nominating campaign was shaping up. Broder had no idea. Neither did anyone else Wilkie talked to during those early days before the Iowa caucuses. "No one knows what the hell's goin' on."

Wilkie echoed the frustration of several political reporters who were trying to divine order out of the chaos which characterized the early days of the 1988 primaries. No one had emerged as a front-runner, particularly among the Democrats. This frustration was apparent in the reporters' writings. The Democrats were characterized as "The Seven Dwarfs" or "the midgets," not because they lacked the qualifications to be president but because none had sparked enough interest in the electorate to become a clear front-runner (Klein, 1988; Diamond 1988; Stern 1988).

Past studies have noted that because of limited time and resources, journalists do not divide coverage equally among all presidential hopefuls. Those perceived as front-runners received considerably more coverage than those judged as hopeless cases and this disparity in coverage can have an important influence on the course of the campaign (Robinson and Sheehan 1983; Buell 1988; Brady and Johnston 1988; Patterson 1980; Lichter et al 1990).

But most of these studies are based on elections in which top contenders can easily be separated from the also-rans. Because most recent elections have featured clear favorites, less research has been conducted on ones, such as the 1988 Democratic primaries, which featured no clear front-runner during most of the campaign.

This study will examine how the press covered the 1988 Democratic primaries before Michael Dukakis established himself as the front-runner. Most specifically, this study will examine amount and tone of coverage for each of the seven candidates to determine what influence the press had in a campaign that lacked a clear leader.

Several studies of earlier campaigns have shown that journalists perform what researchers Michael Robinson and Margaret Sheehan (1983) call "journalistic triage". Candidates are ranked as front-runners, contenders and hopeless cases based primarily on standings in pre-election polls, but also on such factors as organizational and financial strength and ability to garner endorsements (Adams 1984; Broh 1983; Lichter 1988; Atkin and Gaudino 1984; Marshall 1981; Bartels 1988; Polsby and Wildalvsky 1988).

The effects of this "journalistic triage" would be inconsequential if it were only used by reporters to sort out who is ahead and who is behind. But there is considerable evidence that this ranking process influences coverage and ultimately the selection process itself. Several studies indicate that amount of coverage given a candidate reflects both his perceived and actual performance in the campaign. Amount of coverage largely mirrors standings in the polls (Lichter 1988; Adams 1984) and performance in the campaign (Patterson 1980; Robinson and Sheehan 1983; Buell 1988; Brady and Johnston 1988).

A candidate's standing not only determines amount of coverage, but also tone of coverage. Candidates who are treated as also-rans receive "death watch coverage"--stories that monitor the health of their campaign. Top contenders, especially ones who do better than expected, can anticipate largely favorable coverage (Robinson and Sheehan 1983). Top challengers also expect the amount of coverage to skyrocket; the amount of Gary Hart's coverage increased tenfold after he emerged as the top challenger to Walter Mondale on the basis of his 15 percent second-place showing in the 1984 Iowa caucuses (Adams 1984). Similarly, Richard Gephardt and Paul Simon doubled their amount of coverage relative to the other Democratic contenders after finishing first and second in Iowa (Lichter et al 1990).

If the top contenders receive largely favorable coverage, one might expect that the front-runners would earn the most favorable coverage of all. This is not borne out by past studies. Rather, a "front-runner effect" seems to exist. The press reserves its harshest coverage for those out in front (Robinson and Sheehan 1983). The press scrutinizes the character and the issue stances of those leading the race, exposing their flaws and foibles. For instance, George Bush had to battle the wimp label throughout the Republican primaries. The so-called "wimp factor" even became the subject of a Newsweek cover story (Garrard 1987).

However, some research indicates that the press not so much tears down the person in front, but builds up challengers who do much better than expected. Front-runners receive positive coverage by virtue of leading the race, but their amount of positive coverage pales in comparison to the candidate who does better than expected)Johnson 1987).

How the press covers the primaries can have a dramatic influence on the direction of the race. By devoting considerable positive coverage to contenders while providing also-rans only sparse coverage which focuses on the failing health of their campaigns, reporters might be creating a self-fulfilling prophesy. Those given additional coverage because of high poll standings and solid performance in the campaign can expect poll standing to climb even further. Those ignored by the press can expect their poll standings to continue to slide and to find it more difficult to attract campaign workers and dollars needed to support a campaign (Broh 1983; Robinson and Sheehan 1983; Editorial Research Reports 1984). Coverage, then, can influence who the public thinks is viable. People do not normally support a candidate who they believe has little chance of winning (Joslyn 1984; Matthews 1978; Patterson 1980; Brady and Johnston 1988; Bartels 1988).

The press can also influence the campaign at the top. By devoting more positive campaign coverage to the contenders who surprise political pundits than to front-runners, the press can generate enough momentum to help the challenger surpass the front-runner (Bartels and Broh 1989; Lichter 1988; Buell 1988; Matthews 1978; Marshall 1983; Lichter et al 1990).

Past studies, then, have found some consistent patterns in amount and tone of primary coverage. But most of these studies are based on elections where a clear front-runner emerges.

Coverage patterns may differ in an election when no one can claim the front-runner mantle. Therefore the press may have a different influence in such campaigns.

Indeed, some studies do suggest the media cover the election differently when no candidate is the clear leader.

Studies of network news coverage during the year before the 1988 primaries began found that all candidates, with the exception of Gary Hart, received relatively similar amounts of coverage. Once the campaign began, though, amount of television coverage reflected relative standing in the race (Lichter et al 1990). Similarly, all candidates except Hart received relatively positive coverage during the preprimaries. However, during Iowa and New Hampshire, tone of coverage was in near reverse proportion to poll standings. Top contenders Michael Dukakis, Paul Simon and Richard Gephardt saw their coverage become increasingly negative while darkhorse Bruce Babbitt continued to enjoy extremely positive coverage (Lichter et al 1990).

The 1988 presidential primaries serve as the perfect laboratory to investigate how newspapers and the networks cover an election without a front-runner.

Researchers and pundits (Lichter et al 1990; Witcover and Germond 1989) identified five key stages in the 1988 primaries before any candidate was declared a front-runner: The preprimary period (1987(, the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary (Jan. 1 to Feb. 17), Super Tuesday (Feb. 19 to March 8), the Midwest primaries (March 9 to April 5) and the New York primary (April 6 to April 20).

The race was particularly chaotic after Gary Hart's chances at the nomination sank following the Miami Herald's accusations that he spend two days with Donna Rice in his townhouse. Any of the seven candidates could have claimed to be a serious contender during 1987 depending on what measure one used. Jesse Jackson and Hart, because of name recognition, lead national polls during the latter half of 1987. Paul Simon, Richard Gephardt and Hart swapped places atop the Iowa Poll. Michael Dukakis was judged a serious contender by virtue of his large war chest of campaign contributions and his lead in the New Hampshire primary polls. Albert Gore lead several polls in the South. Even media favorite Bruce Babbitt who dwelled at the bottom of most national polls, was considered a favorite in several Western states (Germon and Witcover 1989; Fly 1987; Fly and Harbrect 1987; Litchter et al 1990).

The first half of the primary campaign did little to clarify the race beyond winnowing out Bruce Babbitt.

Paul Simon, Richard Gephardt, Michael Dukakis, and Jesse Jackson were all touted as potential front-runners during at least one stage of the primary race. Gore was billed as a serious contender following his strong showing in Super Tuesday.

A clear front-runner did not emerge until Michael Dukakis handily defeated Jesse Jackson and Albert Gore in the New York primary in late April (Apple 1988b).

This study will address three specific research question:

1. How did amount off coverage for each candidate vary, if at all, over the different stages of the primary campaign? The study seeks to find out if the media equally divided coverage among all the viable candidates or whether the press divided the candidates into front-runners, contenders and hopeless cases as earlier studies have indicated.

2. What was the tone of coverage given to each candidate during each stage of the primaries and how did tone of coverage correspond to perceived standing in the race?

3. What accounted for differences in tone of coverage? This study will look at tone of coverage for four classes of stories--campaign news, campaign issues, policy issues and horse-race coverage--to try to explain differences in tone of coverage.

METHODS

This study examined the amount and tone of coverage for the 1988 Democratic presidential hopefuls through a content analysis of the New York Times and the three commercial networks. The New York Times was chosen because it is considered the nation's newspaper of record. Television coverage was analyzed through the Television News Index and Abstract produced by the Vanderbilt archives.

All newspaper and television news stories, features and news analysis front October 1, 1987 to April 20, 1988 concerning the election were coded. Items appearing on the editorial or op/ed page were not coded. Similarly, television stories labeled as commentary were not coded.

October 1 was selected as the staring point because all the potential candidates had declared their intentions by then and potential candidates such as Pat Schroeder, Joseph Biden and Dale Bumpers had dropped out. April 20 was chosen as the end point because Michael Dukakis had been established as the clear front-runner at that point after his victory in the New York primaries. Reporters began focusing more on the Fall campaign than the remainder of the primaries (Apple 1988b).

The preprimaries and primaries were divided into the five distinct periods indicated earlier: the preprimaries, the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary, Super Tuesday, the Midwest primaries and New York.

The basic unit of analysis was the story. For television, coders were told to treat each heading in the Television News Index and Abstracts as a separate story.

Before amount and tone of coverage could be determined, stories were broken down into four major categories:
campaign news, campaign issues, policy issues and horse-race stories. Coders were told to determine the dominant theme of each article. But because stories often had more than one theme--particularly television accounts in which all the day's election news was often included in one package--a story could have more than one theme.

Policy issues are stories about issue stands and policy preferences of the candidates or the party on questions of how to run the country.

Campaign issues, on the other hand, are issues raised either by journalists or other candidates apart from questions about how the candidate would run the country. These include issues raised during the campaign (such as the dirty tricks of the Dukakis campaign or the Iran/Contra affair), candidate gaffes and blunders (e.g. Pat Robertson's claim that the soviets stored nuclear weapons in Cuba) and stories about the general image and personal image of the candidate (Dukakis' aloof image or Hart's womanizing).

Horse-race stories focus on who is ahead and who is behind in the campaign. Horse-race stories include: public support for the candidate, expectations about how a candidate will perform in a campaign event, momentum in the campaign, organizational and financial strength, endorsements, stories about actual performance in a campaign event and delegate count stories.

Campaign news stories were ones about general day-to-day campaign activities and news not framed in terms of issues or the horse race. The campaign news category also included profiles on the candidate, his family or his staff. for instance, this category would include stories about Michael Dukakis donning a uniform to play basketball or that a bomb threat resulted in the cancellation of a Jackson speech as well as profiles on a candidate such a Albert Gore.

Amount of coverage was measured by totalling how many stories mentioned the candidate. This study also gauged prominence of coverage. Prominence appeared in a headline (or was the main subject of television accounts).

Each theme of the story was coded for tone. Themes were coded as either positive, negative, neutral or mixed. The neutral and mixed categories were combined during the analysis.

RESULTS

Past studies of elections which featured a clear front-runner indicate the press based amount of coverage on perceived standing in the race and that candidates who did much better than expected received more positive coverage than front-runners.

This study revealed a slightly different pattern. In the absence of a clear front-runner, the media gave similar amounts of coverage to all candidates actively campaigning for the nomination (Table 1). However, prominence of coverage did appear to be linked to perceived performance of the candidate (Table 2). Finally, this study finds mixed support for the so-called "front-runner effect," the claim that the person leading the race comes under attack from the press (Table 3).

Amount of Coverage

Coverage patterns over the five periods of the preprimaries demonstrate that while those viewed as serious candidates for the nomination received relatively equal amounts of coverage drop dramatically (Table 1).

After Gary Hart temporarily dropped out of the race in May 1989, no candidate came in to fill the vacuum as front-runner during the preprimaries. All the declared candidates trailed undecided in published public opinion polls (Germond and Witcover 1989).

Amount of coverage devoted to the candidates during the preprimaries reflected the lack of a clear leader. All the candidates received approximately the same of coverage (Table 1).

However, the amount of coverage devoted to each candidate was not spread evenly throughout the preprimary campaign. Rather different candidates received varying amounts of attention throughout the preprimaries. The press would focus attention on a candidate as a possible front-runner, then turn to another candidate when the spotlighted candidate failed to catch fire (data not shown).

The press began to perform "journalistic triage" once the campaign began, although no dramatic shifts in coverage patterns occurred.

Richard Gephardt, by virtue of his lead in the Iowa Poll and his victory in the first event on the campaign calendar, received the most attention during the Iowa/New Hampshire phase. Gephardt was followed by New Hampshire winner Michael Dukakis and Paul Simon, who finished in the top three in both New Hampshire and Iowa (Table 1). Hart initially grabbed the lead in the Iowa Polls and remained a curiosity to the press even after his poll standings fell. Consequently, he also received considerable coverage.

But Jesse Jackson, Bruce Babbitt and Albert Gore were hardly ignored by the press. All received considerable coverage despite the fact that none of the three were serious candidates in New Hampshire and Iowa. Gore received 10 percent of the coverage despite skipping the first two events on the calendar to concentrate on the Southern states casting ballots on Super Tuesday.

Dukakis emerged from New Hampshire as the early favorite to win the nomination and his position as nominal front-runner is apparent in amount of coverage leading up to Super Tuesday.

But Dukakis was hardly the only candidate receiving attention from the press during the Super Tuesday campaign. Gephardt, Gore and Jackson were also showered with press attention. The press did winnow out three candidates who were not expected to do well in the Super Tuesday primaries: Simon, Hart and Babbitt. In fact, Babbitt had to drop out after not performing well in either Iowa or New Hampshire. Hart's coverage dropped dramatically when it became clear he was no longer a serious candidate (Table 1).

Prominence of Coverage

Unlike amount of coverage, prominence of coverage did appear related to performance in the race. Those candidates who performed well grabbed a larger share of the headlines than those who fared poorly (Table 2). However, events in the campaign also seemed to be a major determinant of amount of coverage, particularly during the early stages.

Jesse Jackson and Gary Hart were the focus of much os the preprimary coverage as evidenced by the number of times their names appeared in headlines (Table 2). Hart, by virtue of his stunning decision to re-enter the campaign in December, was destined to grab most of the headlines. Jackson perhaps received considerable coverage because his charisma and race separated him from the rest of the "car pool."

During the Iowa/New Hampshire campaigns, Hart appeared in the most headlines despite poor performances in both Iowa and New Hampshire. The Iowa winner, Richard Gephardt, was also featured prominently in stories. Gephardt's name appeared twice as many headlines as both Dukakis and Simon. The least active candidate, Albert Gore, received 6 percent of the headlines that did mention one of the candidates.

After New Hampshire, prominence of coverage appeared to be influenced by expected and actual performance in the campaign.

Prominence of coverage during the Super Tuesday campaign reflected amount of coverage and both were influenced significantly by expected performance in the Super Tuesday primaries. Dukakis, Jackson and Gore equally divided the delegates awarded in the Super Tuesday and all three were prominently covered in the press. The only candidate who received considerable attention from the press despite poor expected performance in Super Tuesday was Iowa winner Richard Gephardt.

While Dukakis, Jackson and gore received relatively equal coverage after Super Tuesday, prominence measures reveal that the press now treated the primaries as a two-person race between Dukakis and Jackson with Gore playing the part of the spoiler. because Jackson surprised Dukakis and the political experts by winning Michigan, he received a surge of coverage after that primary and dominated the headlines. On the other hand, Gore fared poorly after Super Tuesday and his name dropped from the headlines despite the fact he received considerable attention by virtue of receiving an endorsement from Edward Kock in the New York primaries.

Simon lead throughout the Illinois campaign and won his home state. But his modest amount of prominent coverage indicates the media wrote him off after he failed to win either the Super Tuesday primaries. Similarly, Gephardt and Hart were also treated as hopeless cases and ignored by the press.

Tone of Coverage

Coverage patterns showed limited support for the idea the media attack the candidate who leads the race--the so called "front-runner effect." The top contenders generally enjoyed positive coverage, although at certain points in the primaries the nominal front-runners did see amount of positive coverage drop.

Hart dominated the headlines during the preprimaries, but Hart demonstrated that attention in itself is not necessarily positive. While most of his coverage was mixed or neutral, negative comments about him outpaced positive ones. Gore was the only other candidates to receive more negative than positive coverage, though like all other candidates except Dukakis, the majority of his coverage was neutral.

Dukakis was the only candidate who enjoyed a plurality of positive coverage during the preprimaries. Dukakis' balance of positive to negative coverage is surprising considering he was embroiled in a major controversy when Campaign Manager John Sasso was accused of sabotaging Joe Biden's campaign. Perhaps Dukakis' coverage reflected positive organization and finance stories which suggested his campaign was the most fit to weather the presidential campaign.

Dukakis, Gephardt and Simon came out of Iowa and New Hampshire races as the early favorites. But they were hardly salvaged by the media. Indeed, tone of coverage appeared to be dictated by performance in the two primaries. The two winner, Dukakis and Gephardt, received the most positive coverage while top challenger Simon enjoyed slightly more positive than negative coverage. The candidates who did not fare well in either Iowa or New Hampshire suffered from more negative coverage than positive coverage, although in each case neutral coverage matched or outplaced negative stories.

An underdog effect seemed to operate in terms of tone of coverage during the Super Tuesday campaign.

Jackson and Gore, who performed poorly before Super Tuesday, shot up dramatically in terms of percentage of positive coverage after performing well in Super Tuesday.

Dukakis solidified the notion he would become the front-runner of the campaign by winning the most delegates at stake in Super Tuesday. but the media did not treat him as they treated 1984 potential front-runner Gary Hart. Dukakis still enjoyed considerable positive coverage.

The press considered Babbitt, Simon and Hart as hopeless cases during the Super Tuesday campaign and their paucity of positive coverage reflected that. In fact, the media had nothing good to say about Hart's floundering campaign.

The Midwest primaries provided the first support for the claim the press attacks those leading the race, but even that support was feeble. Dukakis and Jackson both saw their level of positive coverage drop, although both enjoyed largely positive coverage. The drop in Dukakis' positive support probably reflected his disappointing performances in the Illinois and Michigan primaries. The press did appear to scrutinize Jackson's candidacy after his Michigan victory transformed him from a top challenger to a co-favorite to win the nomination. The press reported that party officials began whispering about their fears of a Jackson nomination because they did not believe he was electable (Apple 1988a; Dionne). However, the considerable positive coverage he enjoyed from his strong efforts in Illinois and Michigan outweighed his negative coverage about the "electability factor."

If the press punished anyone in the Midwest it was Albert Gore who failed to capitalize on his Super Tuesday victories. Gore saw his percentage of positive coverage drop below Simon and Gephardt, although Gore received less negative coverage than Gephardt. simon saw his amount of positive coverage double after winning in Illinois, but the positive stories were still drowned out by negative ones claiming he had little chance at taking the nomination.

Past research suggests that the press should have begun training their guns on Dukakis during the New York primaries as he was beginning to solidify his claim to front-runner status. But instead, the press devoted less negative coverage to Dukakis in the New York primary campaign than in the Midwest primaries. Jackson's hopes for victory faded after he failed to win in Wisconsin and his level of positive coverage dropped considerably during the New York campaign. Gore's coverage improved slightly, but negative coverage still outpaced positive stories in New York.

Types of Coverage

The tone by type of story breakdown (Table 4) demonstrates that differences in how the candidates were covered depending largely on performance in the race.

Horse-race coverage dominated the campaign as it has in the last five elections. Approximately 60 percent of all the stories were devoted to the horse race (data not shown).

Not surprisingly, tone of horse-race coverage closely resembled standing in the race. Dukakis and Jackson enjoyed largely positive horse-race coverage while the plurality of horse-race coverage for Babbitt, Simon, Gore and Hart was negative. Gephardt also received generally positive horse-race coverage by virtue of leading the race during the Iowa campaign.

With the exception of Gary Hart and Richard Gephardt, the candidates did not differ dramatically in tone of coverage for campaign news, campaign issue and policy issue stories.

The overwhelming portion of coverage other than horse race was neutral or mixed for most candidates. Most candidates enjoyed more positive than negative campaign news coverage with Dukakis having the largest number of positive campaign news stories. On the other hand, campaign issue coverage was more negative than positive for most candidates.

Hart and Gephardt proved to be the major exceptions to these rules.

Hart was ridiculed by both the press and the candidates for his decision to re-enter the race. After initially surging to the top of the polls, Hart quickly dropped to the rank of also-rans (Germond and

Witcover 1989). Not surprisingly, then he suffered more negative coverage than his counterparts.

But Gephardt sat atop the polls in Iowa and only began to slip after he failed to follow up his victory in Iowa with a strong showing in New Hampshire. Yet, he had more negative than positive campaign and policy issue stories.

Gephardt may have become victim of the front-runner effect. The press began to scrutinize Gephardt' after his Iowa victory. The candidates and the press questioned the wisdom of his trade policies and his support for Ronald Reagan's 1981 tax cut. Furthermore, he was attacked for flip flopping on issues (Germond and Witcover 1989).

CONCLUSIONS

Studies of presidential campaigns in which a front-runner emerges early in the race have found clear patterns in both amount and tone of coverage.

The past studies indicate the press sorts candidates into three categories--based on such factors as poll standings, organizational strength and number of endorsements. The amount of coverage given a candidate is based on standing in the campaign.

Furthermore, studies have discovered what could be labeled as front-runner effect. While the front-runner might receive positive coverage, it will be eclipsed by the amount given the top challenger who does better then expected. The press, then, can affect the balance of the race as it did in 1984 when top challenger Gary Hart briefly overtook Walter Mondale before negative coverage helped bring him crashing back to earth.

All candidates actively campaigning for the Democratic nomination received similar amounts of coverage. This was especially true before Iowa when no candidate emerged as a favorite. But even in New York, the three active campaigners--Gore, Dukakis and Jackson--received similar amounts of coverage. Beginning with the Iowa and New Hampshire campaign, however, those who performed well received the most coverage.

A "journalistic triage" was more apparent in prominence of coverage than in amounts of coverage, however. Gephardt became a major focus of coverage during the Iowa and New Hampshire after Iowa Polls established him as an early favorite. More attention centered on Dukakis after he took the New Hampshire primary and Gore's coverage also jumped during Super Tuesday. Similarly, Jackson became the prime focus of coverage after he performed well in Super Tuesday then followed that up with strong performances in Illinois and Michigan.

Similarly, candidates such as Hart, Simon, Babbitt and Gephardt dropped out of the headlines when it became clear they were no longer serious contenders.

These results suggest that even if no clear order merges in the campaign, the press will try to establish order so that it can allocate resources in proportion to perceived chances of receiving the nomination. In races with clear favorites and obvious also-rans, allocation will be based on clear evidence such as standing in the polls. In races without a front-runner, the press may have a greater roll in establishing the order of the candidates.

These results also suggest that prominence is a much clearer indicator of how the press covered the campaign than amount of coverage. Those studies which have relied on amounts as indicators of extent of coverage (e.g. Lichter et al 1990; Robinson and Sheehan 1983), may underestimate differences in how the press actually covers the campaign.

Past studies have found evidence of a "front-runner effect" or and "underdog effect." The press attacked the candidate leading the race or at least gave considerably more positive coverage to top contenders who do better than expected than to those leading the race.

This study found some evidence of a front-runner effect at two point in the 1988 primaries. Gephardt came under attack by the candidates and the press for his policies and his supposed flip flops after his victory in Iowa. Jackson saw a surge of positive coverage during the Super Tuesday campaign when he emerged as the main challenger to Dukakis then saw his amount of positive coverage drop following strong showing in Illinois and Michigan. But the plurality of his coverage remained positive during the Midwest campaign.

However, the man who eventually earned the nomination, Michael Dukakis, enjoyed largely positive coverage throughout the campaign thanks to extremely positive horse-race coverage. The only time Dukakis saw his percentage of positive coverage fall was during the Midwest primaries. He performed poorly in Illinois and Michigan and therefore his horse-race coverage was more negative.

At first glance, the media did not seem to play as powerful a role in the 1989 Democratic primaries as in the 1984 campaign in which the press make a legitimate contender out of a candidate (Hart) who finished a weak second in Iowa then brought that candidate back to earth with a barrage of negative stories after he emerged as the front-runner.

It appears than in 1988 the press followed events rather than lead them. The focus of coverage changed depending on who won the most recent important primary. The press, except in a couple instances, did not seem to attack the nominal front-runner.

But this study suggests the press does play an important role in races without a front-runner. First, the press appears to have a greater role in determining who should be the top contenders and who should be the also-rans in races where the polls do not give clear answers on who are the leaders and who are the followers. Second, by giving largely favorable coverage to the nominal front-runners who won particular races, the press may have reinforced opinions that the candidate was indeed a viable contender for the nomination. Reinforcement of previous attitudes is just as important an effect of the media as attitude conversion (Lang and Lang 1981).

This study, then, suggests that a cyclical relationship exists between events and campaign performance. Campaign performance influences amount and tone of coverage a candidate receives and amount and tone of coverage has an impact on candidate performance. This does not mean that these are the only two factors in the equation. Campaign events such as the Donna Rice affair certainly influence both amount of coverage and campaign performance. However, media organizations can choose to dramatize or play down individual campaign events and how the media cover an event certainly will influence how that event affects the course of the race.

Table 1: Amount of coverage devoted to each candidate during the 1988 Democratic primaries.

	1987	Iowa/ New Hampshire	Super Tuesday	Midwest	New York
Dukakis	16%	16%	22%	26%	32%
Jackson	16	11	18	27	33
Hart	13	16	8	3	2
Gore	13	10	19	19	27
Simon	16	16	11	13	4
Gephardt	15	18	20	12	1
Babbitt	12	12	3	1	0
	—	—	—	—	—
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=437	N=824	N=510	N=655	N=412

Table 2: Prominence of coverage for each Democratic candidate as measured by percentage of headlines in which he appears

	1987	Iowa/ New Hampshire	Super Tuesday	Midwest	New York
Dukakis	15%	12%	28%	32%	36%
Jackson	31	10	14	45	45
Hart	27	27	5	3	0
Gore	9	6	22	8	16
Simon	7	12	3	4	3
Gephardt	7	26	20	6	0
Babbitt	4	8	8	0	0
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=98	N=124	N=76	N=143	N=105

Table 3: Tone of coverage for each candidate during each stage of the Democratic primary.

PREPRIMARIES

	Dukakis	Jackson	Hart	Gore	Simon	Gephart	Babbitt
Positive	49%	29%	19%	16%	34%	24%	14.5%
Negative	14	17	30	28	14	12	14.5
Neutral	37	54	51	57	52	62	71
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=70	N=78	N=53	N=58	N=71	N=67	N=55

$X^2=38.94$, 12 d.f., $p<.001$

IOWA/NEW HAMPSHIRE

	Dukakis	Jackson	Hart	Gore	Simon	Gephardt	Babbitt
Postive	50	20	12	18	30	46	12
Negative	9	30	44	33	21	16	42
Neutral	40	50	44	49	48	38	46
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=163	N=103	N=140	N=98	N=161	N=180	N=116

$X^2=137$, 12 d.f., $p<.001$

Table 3 (continued): Tone of coverage for each candidate during each stage of the Democratic primary.

SUPER TUESDAY

	Dukakis	Jackson	Hart	Gore	Simon	Gephardt	Babbitt
Positive	59%	60%	0%	33%	7%	28%	6%
Negative	13	6	63	21	47	36	65
Neutral	29	34	37	46	47	36	29
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=135	N=105	N=38	N=111	N=60	N=111	N=17

X^2=146.3, 12 d.f., p<.001

MIDWEST

	Dukakis	Jackson	Hart	Gore	Simon	Gephardt	Babbitt
Positive	43%	48%	5%	9%	19%	8%	16%
Negative	16	18	67	38	32	55	43
Neutral	41	34	29	53	49	37	43
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=209	N=222	N=21	N=133	N=91	N=89	N=7

X^2=145.8, 12 d.f., p<.001

NEW YORK

	Dukakis	Jackson	Hart	Gore	Simon	Gephardt	Babbitt
Positive	44%	22%	25%	16%	17%	0%	0%
Negative	7	22	17	27	39	33	0
Neutral	49	56	58	57	44	67	100
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=160	N=164	N=12	N=128	N=18	N=6	N=1

X^2=58.82, 12 d.f., p<.001

Table 4: Tone of campaign news, campaign issue, policy issue and horse race coverage for each 1988 Democratic candidate.

		Campaign News	Campaign Issues	Police Issues	Horse Race
	Positive	21%	11%	11%	70%
Dukakis	Negative	7	31	17	6
	Neutral/mixed	73	58	72	24
		—	—	—	—
		100%	100%	100%	100%
		N=135	N=74	N=103	N=489
	Positive	18%	10%	10%	50%
Jackson	Negative	8	29	13	22
	Neutral/mixed	74	60	77	28
		—	—	—	—
		100%	100%	100%	100%
		N=133	N=68	N=87	N=439
	Positive	9%	5%	5%	15%
Hart	Negative	20.5	51	14	61
	Neutral/mixed	70.5	44	82	24
		—	—	—	—
		100%	100%	100%	100%
		N=68	N=39	N=22	N=140
	Positive	6%	16%	7%	24%
Gore	Negative	9	22	14	42
	Neutral/mixed	84	63	79	34
		—	—	—	—
		100%	100%	100%	100%
		N=95	N=51	N=72	N=326
	Positive	10.5%	10%	7%	30%
Simon	Negative	10.5	20	13	38
	Neutral/mixed	79	71	80	32
		—	—	—	—
		100%	100%	100%	100%
		N=67	N=41	N=45	N=241

Table 4 (continued): Tone of campaign news, campaign issue, policy issue and horse race coverage for each 1988 Democratic candidate.

	Positive	17%	12%	10%	42%
Gephardt	Negative	8	42	22	32
	Neutral/mixed	75	46	67	25
		100%	100%	100%	100%
		N=72	N=50	N=67	N=269
	Positive	7%	12%	8%	15%
Babbitt	Negative	5	12	8	60
	Neutral/mixed	89	76	84	25
		100%	100%	100%	100%
		N=44	N=17	N=24	N=106

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Session on Pedagogy and Political Activism,
Qualitative Studies Division

Making the Product and Reading the Text: Politics, Culture and Media Studies

Mark Schulman
Chairperson
Department of Communication

New School for Social Research
New York, New York
212-741-8903

I. Introduction: Issues of Pedagogy and Curriculum

Last year, I left The City College of the City University of New York to become chairperson of a newly-formed Department of Communication at the New School for Social Research. This makes the fifth time in my professional career I've moved to a new or revamping department in our field. Next year, I'll have spent two decades in communications programs, the majority of those twenty years with some administrative responsibilities in developing and running programs.

It's a wide-ranging array of institutions where I've spent my time -- from a conservative women's college, through a progressive residential liberal arts college, a traditionally-structured Catholic college, the "flagship campus" of the world's largest urban university, and, finally, to "the university for educated adults." Coupled with the even broader range of institutions with which I've worked as a consultant, my background prepared me for the pedagogical and curricular issues we face in constructing programs for the nineties and beyond (THE -- shudder -- MILLENNIUM, that is).

What has surprised me is that the issues of how to build, sustain, and evaluate a communication program are similar across the wide range of institutions with which I am familiar. Let's first take a look at an outline of some of those issues, and then I'll suggest how they play themselves out in my own current situation.

One last counsel: my individual evolution has led me to the understanding that a critical emphasis is essential in any communication studies program. By "critical," I mean that each aspect of a program must interrogate culture, question power, and study the politics of the media. With the hope that my ruminations, tentative as they may be, will lead us to a more general discussion of the framework within which all this is contained, I identify four issues for our consideration.

It seems to me there are a series of "To what extent . . . either/or" statements which define the arena of which we speak:

•To what extent should a communication program be either theoretical/abstract . . . or practical/concrete?

> There are several dimensions to this aspect, not the least of which is the demand on the part of many of our students for vocational skills. We can stress the need for theory as the basis for practice, and we can also design curricula which acknowledges the necessity of abstractions formed from concrete interactions. I have found that there is dissension among faculty members, and between the faculty and students, in discussing exactly how to blend these goals.

•To what extent should a communication program be either incremental/sequential . . . or freefloating/unstructured?

Given a desire to provide maximum curricular choice for the individual student, how do we determine what to require and what to leave optional? How much should the student specialize; how much share a "core" curriculum with others who have different desired career paths? In my experience, those faculty who come from industry experience shun a rigid core ("too theoretical," they say -- which is not really accurate), and the academically-trained faculty opt for a common set of courses which build through increments. But even within a specialization -- journalism, for example -- there are debates about how much to sequence and how much structure to demand: Journalism I, II, III, *n* as skills sections, on the one hand; a more student-centered, journalistic studies set of options, on the other.

•*To what extent should a communication program be either critical/hegemonic . . . or diffuse/open-ended?*

There is an irony to asking this question at this time in this way. We risk entering into the absurd political correctness debate. If we can avoid it, we do have a real issue, which those of us who feel strongly that students deserve, indeed require, critical communication studies often discuss. How many critical communicators should comprise the faculty of a program? A third? Half? All or nearly all? Avoiding the false eclecticism of mainstream programs, and realizing the answer depends more on political realities than theories, we must determine how to remain open and yet offer the crucial critical counterweight to years and tons of bourgeois media propaganda.

·*To what extent should a communication program be either political economy . . . or cultural studies?*

. . . which brings us to the central issue implied in the title of this paper. The harshest, or at least loudest, debates within critical communication study are between the political economists and the cultural analysts, which includes postmodernists, post-structuralists, psychoanalytic Marxists . . . and a long list of others. In all the programs I've worked with, and at all the professional gatherings I've attended, this is the constant question among those who share the critical label. And I believe that the questions of signification, power, and production which arise from this arena have the fundamental concerns for the boundaries of all communications programs subsumed among them.

The answers to these "to what extents," of course, will vary from program to program. And, in any event, "either/or" formulations must yield in the critical universe to a dialectical understanding of the spectrum upon which we choose our place when we test our notions in actual circumstances.

It is useful as *praxis*, therefore, to examine in some detail the structure and concerns I contend with in my current program at the New School.

II. A Snapshot: How It's Been Done at The New School Till Now

The Communication Department is a unique, multi-faceted part of the New School, the adult education division of the New School for Social Research. For over sixty years, the New School has offered a wide variety of courses, taught by distinguished academics and professionals. The Communication Department offers a full spectrum of lectures, seminars, screenings, and cultural and educational programs to degree, certificate, and non-degree students of all ages. Courses are offered year round in three semesters: Fall - beginning late September; Spring - beginning early February; and Summer - in June and July.

Master of Arts in Media Studies: Founded at the New School in 1975, Graduate Media Studies is the academic discipline that explores why we communicate and the tools and processes we use to communicate. A media generalists's approach encourages students to blend communication theory and practice. Seminars are offered in media theory, history, criticism, and research. Production workshops provide an understanding of the potentials and limits of various technologies such as video, film, audio, print, photography, and computers. Course offerings have included: Research Methods in Media Studies; Demystifying Latino Film Images; Media and Propaganda; Science and Technology in Contemporary Culture; Video Criticism; Corporate Media Management; 16mm Film Production I & II; Video Editing.

Students may attend full or part time. Courses meet in the evening for the most part and students complete the program in two to three years.

Certificate in Film Production: The film production workshops are designed for individuals who wish to study the art of independent filmmaking. Courses cover the skills and techniques needed to complete the film projects students initiate at the New School's Film Production Center. Certificate participants complete two of their own film projects during their course of study. Successful completion of eight approved courses, including four mandatory workshops, is necessary to obtain certification. Course offerings have included: Developing Ideas for Film; Intensive 16mm Filmmaking I & II; Cinematography and Lighting; Independent 16mm Film Production; Directing Actors for Films.

Film Workshop students can submit completed films to the Annual Film Festival, where awards and scholarships are presented.

The On-Line Program: In conjunction with Connected Education, Inc., the New School offers students the option of studying a variety of courses taken on-line through their personal computers. Students receive lectures and recitations, interact with faculty and other students, read assigned papers, and submit assignments via personal computer and modem. Students can "call up" classes any time, day or night, and can read and respond immediately or later from almost anywhere in the world. Many courses are available for graduate or undergraduate credit and as non-credit offerings.

Adult Education Course Offerings: The Communication Department offers over eighty different courses each semester in Communication Studies, Advertising and Public Relations, Journalism, Writing for Film and Television, Film Screenings, Criticism, Film and Video Workshops, and the Business of Film and Television. Most courses can be taken for either undergraduate credit or non-credit. And most of the courses can be incorporated into a course of study leading to a BA degree in Humanities and Social Science. We also offer a BA/MA option.

In recent semesters we have offered courses such as: Ethics in Mass Media; Writing Freelance Journalism; On Camera Presentation; Screenwriting I & II; European Films Noir; Cinema & Surrealism; New Directions in the Documentary; Film Producing.

Special Events: The Communication Department sponsors many Special Events throughout the year. Distinctive film screenings, seminars, lectures, and conferences on a broad range of cultural and media topics are presented. Recent events include: **Bernardo Bertolucci, Jannette Dates, Donald Spoto's Hitchcock Retrospective, the NY EXPO of Short Films and Video, screenings with The American Federation of Arts, and the Annual Student Film Festival.**

III. A Redirection: How We Discuss Our Framework for Change

The following section is based on material I used originally in a Reorganization Plan presented to administrators. It serves to indicate, I think, how politics and culture should play themselves out in media studies.

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> I felt that since communication concerns itself to a great extent with internal consciousness, impressions, observations, and the like, rather than force my ideas into your mind on a scientific basis, I would simply ask you to compare my insights with your own. This is not to excuse this communication theory from the facts of life, but rather to admit that these insights must content themselves with resonance rather than certification.
>
> -- John A. Ciampa, *Communication: The Living End*

Communication studies is a field in ferment. For the newly-formed Communication Department, this has created both opportunities and pitfalls.

The recognition that our task is to create resonances of these contending forces in tune with the practical realities of our students offers our main opportunity. We are able, fortunately, to continue on a path charted in the concepts of the Media Studies M.A. Program.

Its former Director, Peter Haratonik, wrote in the most recent *Media Studies Catalogue* in 1989 as introduction:

> Reality is a mediated concept. Each day we employ our senses and our ability to think in perceiving, defining, and interpreting data. We then choose pertinent symbol systems, technology, communications media, to try and convey information, to communicate. Media studies is the academic discipline that analyzes why we communicate, how we communicate and the tools and processes we use in our communication efforts. Media studies is not undertaken in isolation. Rather, there is an interdisciplinary awareness of how ideas and systems are interrelated. Thus, a question always at the forefront of media studies is: How does communication impact upon our culture, business, politics, education -- and indeed, our personal and professional lives?

With Media Studies the cornerstone program of the eclectic offerings of the emergent Communication Department, we have the opportunity to reconceptualize the scope of our study. We can situate *media studies*, with its emphasis on technologies, firmly as one category of *communication studies*, of an analysis of interaction among people. Such interaction, of course, comes through their competencies in using languages to communicate, to share stories within cultural contexts.

More than a "mediated concept," *social* reality, in our communication-as-culture perspective, is a function of the way we structure our worlds with words and gestures and images. We can inform our programs in the Department with *both* the communication *and* communication*s* notions.

"Communication" refers to the primary process of social interaction through the sending and receiving of messages; "communication*s*" encompasses the secondary techniques (or means) of that primary process, those dependent on technological intervention and operation.

Such a reframing of the programmatic, media studies mission into the departmental, communication mission pushes the limits of our enterprise, and increases our abilities to respond to diverse questions with pluralistic insights. We study social formations and their cultures, realizing from our aforementioned distinction that *every* society communicates (for communication is the foundation of culture), and that *some* societies have more sophisticated communication*s* than others (but not necessarily more humane, accurate, or efficient).

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> For a subject to *be* a subject in the curriculum, it has to have a structure of typifying concepts which may be borrowed from all over the place, indeed usually are, but are put to specific uses in the field.
>
> -- Fred Inglis, *Media Theory: An Introduction*

But while it is necessary and appropriate in the new configuration to expand the limit of our tradition in media studies, it is essential, as well, to delimit. This is the pitfall: if we try to think and to do too much, we cannot do any of what we wish to do well.

Many teachers and scholars working in the field suffer at times from professional anxieties, if not from an outright identity crisis. The reason is that communication as an emerging discipline borrows freely from established disciplines: anthropology, linguistics, psychology, and sociology in the social sciences; literature, speech, theater, and foreign languages in the humanities; biology, engineering, technology, and mathematics in the sciences. Communication draws freely from them all, as well as less traditional domains like journalism, film, broadcasting, and computer studies.

We can avoid the pitfall of superficiality by applying rigorous standards as we refine the courses and programs of the past. We wish to retain our breadth, our theory *and* practice orientation, our service to the needs of a wide range of students, and our energetic feistiness. To do so, we can orient our thinking to the attainment of these goals, our "typifying concepts":

- To offer curricula, events, and programs which foster an understanding of the dynamics of human communication in people's lives and in the development and transformation of the culture in which they live and the cultures of others with whom they come in contact.
- To provide in coursework and scholarship an aid to analyzing the role of contemporary mass media in the United States and the world, through comprehension of the history, ethics, and political economy of the media industries and

appreciation of the role of alternatives to the dominant media in historical perspective.

- To train students in general (communicational) and specific (vocational) skills which may lead to further education, to promotion and/or advancement within the media industries, to the more sophisticated use of communication techniques in other career areas and in their communities, and to obtaining entry-level positions in a variety of circumstances in the New York area, nationally, and abroad.

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> ... I want to oppose the tendency inherent in the academic division of labour, to autonomize this field of study and thus both to exaggerate the special significance of the social phenomena under investigation (the study of the media *per se* tends to the trivial) and to cut the field off from the main stream of social science. The media are only worth studying in so far as they focus key problems within the general project of the social sciences.
> -- Nicholas Garnham, *Capitalism and Communication*

The New School began the M.A. program in Media Studies in 1975, and, over the years, The New School has added an extensive array of communication courses to those initial offerings. Each semester, there are at least two dozen or more graduate courses, on campus and through the On-Line Program, and eighty or more other courses in communication studies, advertising and public relations, journalism, writing for film and television, screenwriting, film history and criticism, film and video workshops, and the business of film and television.

The New School offers such a comprehensive communication program that it has, in effect, a "School of Communication Studies." The establishment in 1990 of the Communication Department in the Adult Division is a major step toward recognizing the importance of who we are, what we are doing, and what we can hope to become in the field.

With focussed exertion and with the skill (and luck) to avoid institutional trauma, we can navigate the pitfalls -- such as a deleterious diffuseness of offerings or fuzzy sense of mission -- and take advantage of the opportunities -- not only of our strong media studies tradition but also of our excellent national reputation and location in New York.

The intention we must have is to translate our goals, our "key problems," into the subject as we wish to define it. "[The] most audible and important characterizing feature of a subject," according to media theorist Fred Inglis,

> is its *idiom*, its habits of conversation and thought. How should it sound to talk about media theory [or communication]? What is its voice in the conversation of humankind?

The New School itself has an idiom, a progressive voice in humankind's conversation, of tremendous import, all its own. Its Communication Department, standing on the firm ground of the Media Studies Program that once was, is poised to raise its own harmonizing idiomatic voice in the years to come.

IV. Conclusion

As the field matures, the issues we must address in our pedagogy and curriculum design alter. But the essential questions remain, and they are the same questions asked in other disciplines of the-Western-social-sciences-in-crisis as critical scholars push for transformation.

The debate, once joined, continues without end -- it is, in fact, a process of dialogue which we have no choice but to engage. This should not, however, make us anxious or testy. On the contrary, such engagement allows us to meld the content and form of communication studies in a processual continuum.

Our quest to define critical applications in mass communication pedagogy leads us from communication theory, to media practices, from human interactional analysis, to message design, and back, and back again.

Political and Social Views of Mass Communicators:
A Study of Radio and Television General Managers and News Directors*

Jeremy Harris Lipschultz and Michael L. Hilt**

Department of Communication
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0112
(402) 554-2520

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** Lipschultz (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University, 1990) and Hilt (M.S., University of Kansas, 1986) are assistant professors of broadcasting. Hilt is a doctoral student in Adult Education at University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

ABSTRACT

Political and Social Views of Mass Communicators: A Study of Radio and Television General Managers and News Directors

The present study examines questions about the ownership and management of local radio and television stations, and social and political values of communicators within their mass media organizations.

In a two-state survey, 55.4 percent (N=179) of general managers and news directors responded. Among findings:

- A majority of both groups considered themselves politically "middle-of-the-road."

- General managers and news directors responded positively about their community.

The study calls for more research on mass communicators and their organizations within a social context.

Political and Social Views of Mass Communicators: A Study of Radio and Television General Managers and News Directors

The study of mass communicators as "those who work in media and... those who control or occupy the channels of mass communication" has become an important area of research (McQuail, 1987, p. 138). However, institutional and organizational issues (Breed, 1955, pp. 326-335; Gans, 1979, pp. 78-81; Gitlin, 1980, pp. 249-251, 258) such as organizational culture, ideologies, norms, values, orientations and rites have not been studied extensively within the context of mass communication (Griffin, 1991, pp. 254-263). Media managers are likely to play central roles within organizations of mass communication. For example, the "rite" is seen as "elaborate, dramatic planned sets of activities" which, from the view of a manager, "ensures that there will be no surprises" (pp. 260-261). What is not well-understood are the relative effects of employment stability, political orientation and community standards on mass communicators within media organizations (Gaziano & McGrath, 1987).

At the heart of the present study are questions about the ownership and management of local radio and television stations, social values of communicators within their mass media organizations, the role of audiences and community influences in management-level station employee perceptions, political values of station decision-makers and the importance of education as a variable.

Definitions

Social study of media organizations through their management requires common agreement on the meanings of certain terms. In the present study, key terms are:

* Norms. This "interdisciplinary concept" has numerous definitions, but most include such considerations as conduct standards, "socially shared guidelines," behavioral "shared convictions," and "expected pattern of behavior appropriate in a given situation" (Gibbs, 1981, pp. 7-9). Norms can be problematic as a research tool (Cicourel, 1973, p. 29).

* Values. This concept is seen as a "general orientating" principle which can be difficult to measure directly (Marsh, 1982, p. 110).

* Political orientations. This refers to directions or leanings on such objects as action or policy (Marsh, 1982, p. 126). As such, orientations can be measured through public issues which are seen as important (Cooper, 1989, p. 8).

Literature Review

Ownership and Management of Local Media Outlets

Radio and television stations in the United States are distinguished from broadcast entities in other countries by private ownership and a history of localism (Head and Sterling, 1990). The total number of radio and television stations continued to increase in the last decade (Sherman, 1987). Recent figures in Broadcasting magazine show 9,356 commercial radio and 1,115 commercial television stations on the air, with another 1,373 construction permits for future facilities.[1] "Like any other business, the station must be operated profitably if it is to survive and to satisfy the financial expectations of its owners"[2] (Pringle, Starr and McCavitt, 1991, p. 2).

Despite the large numbers of local stations, some authors argue that there is little content diversity, and that station owners are mainly concerned about profit (Bagdikian, 1985). Mainstream values may be passed on from media owners and corporations to the day-to-day management personnel:

> Owner influence in the media is exercised primarily at second hand, in ways that are effective, necessary, and natural: owners hire and fire those who make everyday decisions on content. It is a rare corporation that hires an influential executive known to be inimical to the owner's heartfelt social values (p. 104).

At the level of local radio and television stations, it is most common for the corporate owner to entrust to the general manager the following daily responsibilities: (1) planning of objectives; (2) station structure; (3) employee oversight; and (4) hiring and firing of the rest of the staff. (Pringle, Starr and McCavitt, 1991, p. 2, 26).

Bagdikian (1985) argues that the range of value differences among media owners is relatively "minor" compared with the total values of society: "They have a narrow, common outlook not out of a conspiracy but because corporations of this size and power by their nature have common goals and outlooks, particularly in economics, in politics, and in sustaining the status quo" (p. 102). While Bagdikian talks mainly about the nation's largest media owners, it is safe to say that corporate cultures exist at the local level. In the case of group-owned and newspaper owned television stations, however, the relationship between ownership and content is not established (Busterna, 1988). Thus, research on the social values of station general managers and the employees below them may be at least as valuable as the study of the owners themselves.

Social Values of Mass Communicators and their Organizations

Mass communication research on mass communicators is grounded in traditional sociology, and the "long-standing sociological interests in status and role, occupations and professions, analyses of complex organizations, and the sociology of work" (Wright, 1986, p. 61). Surprisingly little research has been conducted on roles and functions of mass communicators outside the newsroom. For example, Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) studied demographic characteristics of U.S. news people in a widely-cited work. These data, however, do not address potential influences of upper-management or the organization itself. McQuail (1987), on the characteristics of mass communicators, concludes "relative attitudes and tendencies" of journalists may be owed to work-place socialization: "This view, while not discounting the influence of social background and personal belief, returns us to the greater probability of organizational rather than individual subjective determination" (p. 151). Left unanswered is how outside pressures of occupational standards and corporate economic concerns affect organizational attitudes, and the extent to which the local community and audience introduces its own pressures.

News and Community Values: Audience Feedback

Research on communities and media use suggest varying levels of attachment to one's community (Stamm, 1985), but the community ties of broadcast news people and broadcast executives have not been extensively studied. While communication models predict that mass communicators receive limited "feedback" from their local communities, Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) found that significantly more news people say they obtain regular comments from audience members than from news sources or those within the media outlet. Theorists have identified "the wider society and the community" as influencing mass communicators:

Insert Figure 1 About Here

While McQuail saw the various influences as distinct components within the larger society, the view here is that these sources are more fluid. Thus, broadcasters may be influenced by: (a) individual occupational roles; (b) station organizational concerns and corporate ownership demands; (c) institutional standards; and (d) the influence of the local community in which the station operates, as well as other social and cultural factors. In short, there are forces both inside and outside the organization (Gitlin, 1980, p. 250). The practical economic, community and organizational concerns may be distinguished from two types of political issues: (1) the political aspects of broadcast license regulation and retention; and (2) the fundamental political views of individual broadcast managers.

Political Values of Media Management

It is well-established that the regulation of broadcasting is a political affair (Krasnow, Longley, & Terry, 1982). Although the "public interest" standard exists for broadcasters, the F.C.C. traditionally places responsibility for day-to-day content decisions with the licensee (p. 56). The Commission's rules usually relate to technical, engineering and ownership diversity issues, and broadcast policy as a political matter is somewhat distant from the local station management (Carter, Franklin, & Wright, 1989, p. 156). The political regulatory interests of local broadcast management are more likely to be mediated through industry lobby groups such as the National Association of Broadcasters or the Radio-Television News Directors Association (p. 39, 65-66). However, this is not to say that broadcast managers do not hold individual political views.

The research on political leanings of mass communicators focuses on journalists rather than broadcast managers. The findings are contradictory. Weaver & Wilhoit (1986) found the majority of journalists considered themselves "middle of the road," with most of the rest split evenly between "a little to left" or "a little to right" (p. 26). However, one study found a majority of "media elite" were "liberal" (Lichter, Rothman and Lichter, 1986). Sociologists are divided about whether media personnel support middle-class values and the status quo, "liberal" or "conservative" activism, or are simply apolitical in favor of more immediate economic demands (McQuail, 1987, p. 151).

It is much more common to find mass communication research studying the political leanings of audience members, particularly voters (Swanson & Nimmo, 1990). While researchers continue to explore how mass communication content plays a role in the political socialization of audience members (p. 347), we know little about the political beliefs of either the individual communicators who produce the content or of their organizations (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach & Grube, 1986). Further complicating the findings is the fact that mass communicators themselves are a part of the audience.

Education and Media Use

Although we know little about political views of broadcast managers, there is a considerable body of literature on how they feel about broadcast education. "Despite continuing suspicion about the value of higher education for employment in the broadcast industry, most employers feel a college degree is a minimum requirement" (Renz, 1988, p. 10); "Professional broadcasters surveyed by the Roper organization continued to be critical of university education programs that are perceived to have too little `hands-on' training" (McCall, 1990, p. 9); and "Two-thirds of the nation's news directors say broadcast journalism training at universities generally gives students a head start, with solid grounding in basics" (Stone, 1989, p, 58). We do not know the extent to which these occupational and institutional standards are individual beliefs, or if the use of trade and other media feed the standardized views on broadcast education. Further, media use by broadcast managers may well affect other survey responses.

Station Managers and News Directors Roles

In theory, two of the most influential employees at a broadcast station are the general manager and the news director. The general manager is likely to be the chief fiscal and personnel officer. "It's the general manager who hires the anchor star`and shells cut the big money" (Jacobs, 1990):

> Naturally, the boss wants to protect his investment, and the newscaster is well aware of it. A general manager enjoys showing off his celebrity and the two of them spend a lot of time together, eating, drinking, playing, and talking. That's a tough situation for the news director who, according to the organization chart, is supposed to be in charge of the talent (p. 111).

The news director is normally charged with the overall responsibility for news content, although the larger the market, the broader the responsibility.

> There is a growing managerial role on the part of news directors that is related to the increasing role of the news department in the finances and programming of TV stations. In general, as news staffs get larger, the news director becomes more involved in personnel and budget, and becomes more immersed in overall station policy (Goedkoop, 1988, p. 27).

There is a growing trend among general managers to view their news directors as future GMs (Stone, 1986, p. 2). Quarderer and Stone (April 1989, p. 10) found that news directors and their general managers "embrace common beliefs" about news profitability: "But when it comes to hard data on the bottom line, they share impressions more often than they share numbers."

Quarderer and Stone (May 1989, pp. 32-34) attempt to identify types of managerial relationships. They describe five managerial types (approachable, open-demanding, protective, closed-rigid, and stereotyping), and five news director types (satisfied/comfortable, growth-oriented, happily unaware, timid/passive, and burned/cynical). Thus, numerous relationship types are possible. It is not clear, however, what connection these manager types and relationship types have with community and political views.

The purpose of the present study is to focus on local station general managers and news directors, and to study the political and social views of these two groups of mass communicators.

Research Questions

The limitations of current research on radio and television general managers and news directors led to the following research questions:

1. What are the political orientations of radio and television general managers and news directors? Are these two occupational groups similar or different in their political orientation?
2. What are the perceptions of general managers and news directors about the effects of government influence on their stations?
3. Do general managers differ from their news directors in their views of local communities?
4. Are there educational differences between news directors and general managers? If there are, do these differences relate to orientations toward politics, government and their own communities?

Methodology

General managers and news directors at commercial radio and television stations in Iowa and Nebraska were selected as a purposive, judgmental non-probability sample (Babbie, 1989, p. 204) using the Broadcasting Yearbook (1990). A total of 323 management-level employees were identified for the survey mailing list. The exploratory study of broadcast managers followed survey pre-testing in Summer 1990. The survey was self-administered.

The Total Design Method (Dillman, 1979) for mail surveys was used. Personalized cover-letters, survey booklets and business reply envelopes were sent. The first wave of surveys was mailed in October 1990. This was followed by a reminder postcard 10 days later, and a second mailing of the survey to non-respondents in mid-November.[3]

The overall response rate was 55.4 percent (N=179). The response rate was above average for mail surveys for "management-level populations" (Garrison & Salwen, 1989, p. 78).[4] Response rates did not deviate dramatically for any of the sub-populations by state or occupation.[5]

The survey asked respondents questions concerning the aspects of jobs in broadcasting which they saw as important; the role of broadcast news departments; perceptions and perceived impact of the community on their stations; attitudes about broadcast education; their use of other media; their views on broadcast regulation; political orientations and party identification; and various demographic information. An open-ended question provided respondents the opportunity to identify survey problems, however, few comments were received.

Using the SL-Micro statistical package (Kalush & Kalush, 1985), and SPSS^x, general managers and news directors were compared as occupational groups.

Results

Demographics of the Sample

There were demographic differences between the two occupational groups in terms of lifestyles, educational backgrounds and political orientations.

Lifestyles. The average age for general managers in the sample was 43, and the average age for news directors was 37. White males dominated both occupational groups.[6] News directors were more likely than general managers to never have been married. NDs were less likely to have children. Three out of five news directors reported a household annual income below $35,000, while three out of four of the general managers in the sample reported a household annual income above $35,000. In the most recent census data available, the median household income in the United States was $32,191.[7]

However, despite income differences, the two groups held similar attitudes on a list of thirteen items judging jobs in broadcasting. The general manager and news director respondents, as a group, placed pay, benefits and other rewards in the middle. The two most important items to them were the opportunity to advance and station reputation. Next, in order of importance, were control over one's work and financial position of the station. In the middle of the list were job security; pay, benefits and other rewards; the chance to help others; the role of the news department; responsibility for others; station market position; and freedom from supervision. Least important to the two groups were market size and union representation. It is noteworthy that using a three-point scale (3=very important; 2=somewhat important; and 1=not important), the mean score for union representation was 1.115.

The most important factors -- opportunity to advance and station reputation -- involved both job rewards and job values (Bokemeier & Lacy, 1986). "Job values and rewards are significant independent determinants of job satisfaction with rewards positively related to satisfaction" (p. 190).

Education. In the sample, all news director respondents reported formal education beyond high school, while 12.6 percent of responding general managers did not continue beyond high school. News directors were more likely to have received a college diploma (63 percent versus 35.8 percent for GMs). However, high percentages of general managers reported attending graduate school (21 percent versus 10.9 percent) and receiving graduate degrees (8.4 percent versus 6.8 percent). General managers were more likely to have studied business or liberal arts (other than mass communication), while news directors were more likely to have studied journalism or mass communication. General managers and news directors were in agreement on the criteria used in hiring a newsroom employee. From a list of eleven items, the two groups responded that oral communication skills, self-motivation and writing skills were most important. Next, in order of importance, were dedication, listening skills, news judgment, personality, previous broadcast news experience and college education. The least important of the items were the quality of the audition tape and physical appearance.

Politics. A majority of both general managers (51.1 percent) and news directors (58.3 percent) considered themselves politically "middle-of-the-road." More general managers (36.2 percent) than news directors (23.6 percent) labeled themselves "conservative." More news directors (18.1 percent) than general managers (12.8 percent) considered themselves "liberal." In terms of party affiliation, half of the news directors (50.0 percent) said they were "independent," while nearly half of the general managers (47.8 percent) identified with the Republican Party.[8]

Perceptions of Broadcast Regulation and Social Issues

The Perceived Role of Government. General managers and news directors responded to a list of seven statements concerning the effects of government broadcast regulation on their station. The two groups responded in strongest agreement to the statement: "Stations should be free to make all programming decisions." The two groups most strongly disagreed with the statement: "The fairness doctrine should be reinstated."

Insert Table 1 About Here

The general managers were in greater agreement than news directors on three statements: (1) "Government exerts too much control;" (2) "FCC regulations are too stringent;" and (3) "A ban on indecent programs is good for broadcasting." A small market radio general manager in Iowa was critical of broadcast regulation:

> ...promiscuous and liberal granting of broadcast licenses by the F-C-C without regard to a community's ability to support them is certain to lead to the demise and disqualifying of some otherwise good broadcasters.[9]

But, an small market radio news director in Iowa expressed some support for stronger regulation of media:

> We need a bit more regulation again. It's my understanding that wages and overall benefits have fallen in the last few years for entry-level broadcasters. (But that may be the downward mobility we're all seeing in the Reagan aftermath).[10]

However, it should be noted that within each occupational group, there was disagreement on several statements.

Insert Table 2 About Here

For example, on the statement, "A ban on indecent programs is good for broadcasting," 38 percent of news disagreed, 26 percent were neutral and 36 percent agreed.

Social Views. General managers and news directors responded to a list of ten statements concerning their views on political and social issues. General managers and news directors agreed most strongly with the statement, "Private enterprise is fair to workers." They disagreed most strongly with the statement, "Environmental problems are overstated."

Insert Table 3 About Here

On five items there were statistically significant differences between the two occupational groups, and in all cases general managers were in the direction of greater agreement with the statements: (1) "Private enterprise is fair to workers;" (2) "Less regulation of business is good for the USA;" (3) "Labor unions do not serve the best interests of workers;" (4) "National news media coverage is biased;" and (5) "Social programs should be cut, not defense spending."

For most of the ten statements, there was more disagreement within the news director group than within the general manager group.

Insert Table 4 About Here

There was news director consensus on the three statements concerning environmental problems, social program cuts and farm subsidies.

Community Ties and Social Issues. The two occupational groups were asked to select one of six statements which best described their residential situation. The statements were recoded to form two groups -- those who "plan to stay" in their communities, and those who "don't plan to stay." The responses from the new groups on the social issues questions were compared.

On three items there were statistically significant differences, with those who "plan to stay" in greater agreement with the statements than those who don't: (1) "Private enterprise is fair to workers;" (2) "Less regulation of business is good for the USA;" and (3) "Social programs should be cut, not defense spending." On seven of the ten statements there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups.

Correlation of Broadcast Regulation and Social Issue Statements. Responses of general managers and news directors on the statements about broadcast regulation, and those about social issues, were correlated (see appendix).

Among regulation items, the strongest correlation was between, "Government exerts too much control" and "FCC regulations are too stringent" (.73). The second strongest relationship was between, "Stations should be free to make all programming decisions" and "The public is the best judge on whether a program is too violent" (.48). The strongest negative association was between, "A ban on indecent programs is good for broadcasting" and "Stations should be free to make all programming decisions" (-.38).

Among social issue items, the strongest relationship was between, "Less regulation of business is good for the USA" and

"Private enterprise is fair to workers" (.59). The second strongest correlation was between, "Private enterprise is fair to workers" and "Social programs should be cut, not defense spending" (.47). The strongest negative association was between, "Taxes need to be raised to cut the budget deficit" and "Social programs should be cut, not defense spending" (-.30).

Between the regulation and the social issue statements, the strongest relationship was negative between, "A ban on indecent programs is good for broadcasting" and "A woman has the right to decide about an abortion" (-.38). The strongest positive correlation was between, "Government exerts too much control" and "Less regulation of business is good for the USA" (.37). The second strongest positive relationship was between, "FCC regulations are too stringent" and "Less regulation of business is good for the USA" (.36). In all, there were fifteen statistically significant positive relationships and one statistically significant negative relationship out of seventy correlations between the two groups of statements.

Local Communities and News

General managers and news directors were asked to respond to two sets of questions involving their community. One set dealt with communication feedback from various sources, and the other set involved perceptions of their community.

Comments on Work. The two groups were asked how often they received comments on their work from various sources (regularly, seldom or never). For the nine sources listed, in order of frequency, the mean responses were: (1) "members of the audience" (2.70); (2) "friends"

(2.60); (3) "people who work for you" (2.49); (4) "work superiors" (2.47); (5) "community leaders" (2.47); (6) "peers" (2.46); (7) "newsmakers or sources" (2.39); (8) "station ownership" (2.36); and (9) "relatives" (2.00). There were three statistically significant differences between responses of general managers and news directors, with general managers in all cases in the direction of greater frequency: (1) "people who work for you" (t value=3.25; p=.001); (2) "community leaders" (t value=2.76; p=.007); and (3) "station ownership" (t value=6.02; p=.000).

Station employee longevity and stability were seen as both positive and negative. A small market radio station general manager in Nebraska responded:

> Stability breeds cohesiveness and unity to a common purpose. Long-term employees can become complacent at times, but that's where management must redirect their focus back to the basic mission of serving the listeners and advertisers. It may sometimes be harmful in terms of carrying higher salary/benefit costs.[11]

Other respondents said the loss of good people may be offset by the opportunity for change, growth, new ideas and the chance that the new employee is "better" than the person that left.

Community Statements. The two groups were asked to respond to seven statements about their community. Responses were on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." In order of agreement, the statements were: (1) "good place to raise a family" (4.58); (2) "good schools" (4.46); (3) "clean environment" (4.21); (4) "affordable housing" (3.89); (5) "good city services" (3.84); (6) "good business climate" (3.82); and (7) "good leisure activities" (3.67). On only one item -- affordable housing -- was there a statistically significant difference between general managers and news directors, with general managers in greater agreement (t value=2.53; p=.013).

Conclusions

The survey results led to tentative answers to the four research questions posed.

1. What are the political orientations of radio and television general managers and news directors? Are these two occupational groups similar or different in their political orientation?

A majority of both groups considered themselves politically "middle-of-the-road." However, more general managers than news directors considered themselves "conservative," while more news directors than general managers considered themselves "liberal." Nearly half of the general managers identified with the Republican Party, while half of the news directors called themselves "independent." Thus, while both groups lean toward the center, the general managers are more likely to tilt slightly to the right of center. These self reports remained consistent when compared with their responses to broadcast regulation and social issue statements.

2. What are the perceptions of general managers and news directors about the effects of government influence on their stations?

Both groups support self-regulation by broadcasters as opposed to government control. This is evidenced by their strong agreement with the statement, "Stations should be free to make all programming decisions." At the same time, however, the general manager group favored an FCC ban on indecent programs. And, both groups looked to the public as the best judge on whether a program is too violent. So, for the most part general managers and news directors prefer their own judgments, and those of audience members, rather than those of the government.

3. Do general managers differ from their news directors in their views of local communities?

Overwhelmingly, both general managers and news directors responded positively to a variety of statements about their community. They saw their communities as good places to live and raise families. News directors -- a younger, more transient group -- were less positive than general managers on only one item: affordable housing. This is not surprising because news director household incomes were significantly lower than those of the general managers. Overall, news directors were less tied to the community structure. General managers, for example, were more likely to regularly have contact with community leaders.

4. Are there educational differences between news directors and general managers? If there are, do these differences relate to orientations toward politics, government and their own communities?

News directors were more likely to have a college degree. There was a group of general managers -- 21 percent -- who not only had a college diploma, but had also attended graduate school. General managers were more likely to have studied business or liberal arts (other than mass communication), while news directors were more likely to have studied journalism or mass communication. Thus, there are some educational differences.

From the present data, it is unclear whether these educational differences relate to the differences found in responses to regulation and social issue statements. There is little reason to suspect an association between educational variables and community orientations.

Future Research

Studies of broadcast management have been few and far between. For example, Foote and Monaghan (1970) refer to a study by Winick (1966) as describing characteristics of television general managers in terms of upbringing, job responsibility, job satisfaction and leadership. But, early studies on management have not been followed with systematic research with an eye toward theory-building in the mass communication context.

The present study, for example, identified negative responses toward labor unions among the general managers. The vast majority of stations in the present survey were non-union, yet the issue of whether labor unions serve workers' best interests was a salient one. It would be useful to learn more about the values behind these responses, and whether these are related to historically "bitter exchanges" between management and labor during broadcast contract negotiations (Schubert and Lynch, 1970).

Two major response patterns emerged from the present data set: (1) the older, politically conservative broadcast general manager who was likely to be more deeply embedded in the community; and (2) the younger, politically independent news director who was likely to be on the move. On political issues such as business regulation, private enterprise, social programs, media bias and labor unions there were response differences between occupational groups. However, on political issues such as abortion, the budget deficit, the environment, trust of politicians and farm subsidies there were no significant differences between groups in the present study.

The present study was limited to one point in time, one narrow geographic area (two midwestern states) and two specific occupational groups. Obviously, these data need to be replicated at the national level. The present study can been seen as a fairly narrow aspect of a large and complex study of mass communicators. Those who manage media operations and the organizations they work for are visible to the public, but the behind the scenes workings are not well understood. Lack of understanding about mass communicators continues to inhibit knowledge of mass communication as a process.

It has been more than a third of a century since sociologist Warren Breed observed that leaders of media organizations secure and maintain conformity from employees; that subordinates tend to have more "liberal" attitudes; but that workers understand and adhere to the organization's policies:

> Sociologically, this means they become socialized and "learn the ropes" like a neophyte in any subculture. Basically, the learning of policy is a process by which the recruit discovers and internalizes the rights and obligations of his status and its norms and values. He learns to anticipate what is expected of him so as to win rewards and avoid punishments (Breed, 1955, p. 328).

More recent research has focused on the organization's impact on news (Gitlin, 1980; Gans, 1979). However, in the case of general managers and news directors of local stations, their impact goes well beyond news programming. These broadcast managers influence everything from community and station image to entertainment programming and business concerns.

In terms of a future research agenda, the following methodological issues need to be addressed: (1) A representative national sample of GMs and NDs to go beyond the exploratory nature of the present study; and (2) expansion of political and social measures to take into account broader theoretical issues.

This research explored the political and social values of GMs and NDs as occupational groups. Responses of general managers and news directors need to be placed in context with those of other station personnel, community leaders and the wider society. The issues in a community come to the station from various sources. General managers and news directors, if they so desire, can exercise power in a community by highlighting issues which the organization considers to be important. The question then becomes: Do the political and social values of broadcast managers, which this study found to be similar, influence station policy on organizational behavior such as programming decisions? And how do those decisions, both at individual stations and collectively at the institutional level, make a difference in society?

Notes

1. "For the record," Jan. 14, 1991, p. 124.

2. The authors add this caveat: "Yet, despite its pervasiveness, broadcasting is a comparatively small business. It employs less than 1% of the civilian work force, and its revenues account for less than 1% of the gross national product."

3. The reminder post-card and a second mailing to non-respondents raised the response rate by 15.8 percent, adding 51 surveys to the total.

4. There were 10 respondents who were not classified as either a general manager or news director (96 general managers, 73 news directors and 10 others) for purposes of the analyses of group differences. This included program, farm and sports directors.

5. The response rate from Iowa was just above 50 percent, and the response rate from Nebraska was over 60 percent. The response rates for each of the two occupational groups under study were above 50 percent.

6. Among general managers, 92.6 percent were white, 6.3 percent were native American and 1.1 percent responded "other." This group was 91.7 percent male. Among news directors, 97.3 percent were white, 1.4 percent were black and 1.4 percent responded native American. The news director group was 76.7 percent male.

7. For general managers in the sample, 76.6 percent were above the $35,000 mark, and 53.3 percent were above $50,000 in reported household annual income. For the news director group, 61.9 percent were below $35,000 (36.6 percent, $20,000-35,000; 21.1 percent, $10,000-20,000; and 4.2 percent, below $10,000). U.S. Census Data (1988) reported 45.7 percent of households above $35,000, including 25.7 percent above $50,000. See U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, in Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990, 110th edition, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, tables 726-727, p. 450. The latest national survey of news director salaries reports the median income for television news directors was $44,990, and the median income for radio news directors was $18,200. See Vernon Stone, "Salaries lag cost of living," Communicator 45(2):12-14 (Feb. 1991).

8. For general managers, the party affiliation percentages were: Democrat, 15.6 percent; Republican, 47.8 percent; and Independent, 36.7 percent. For news directors, the distribution was: Democrat, 20.6 percent; Republican, 29.4 percent; and Independent, 50.0 percent).

9. A 67-year-old white male who called himself a conservative independent.

10. A 27-year-old white male who called himself a Democrat. After striking-out "liberal" on the survey, he replaced it with "progressive." He also noted that he was "hoping for an insurgent, viable, left third party."

11. A 38-year-old white male who calls himself a conservative Republican.

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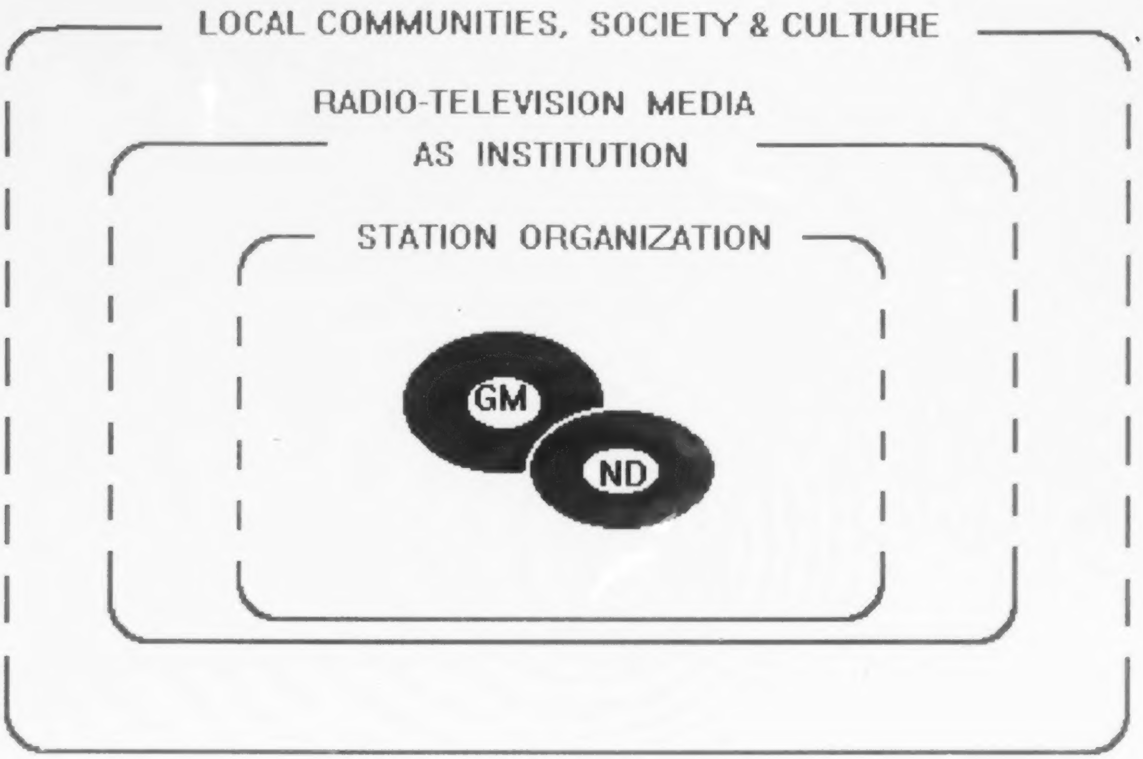
LOCAL COMMUNITIES, SOCIETY & CULTURE
RADIO-TELEVISION MEDIA AS INSTITUTION
STATION ORGANIZATION
GM
ND

FIGURE 1. **Adaptation of McQuail's (1987) relationship of media, institution, organization and mass communicator (p. 139).**

TABLE 1

Comparison of General Manager and News Director Responses on the Effects of Government Broadcast Regulation on their Station

Statements	Group	Means*	S.D.	t Value	2-tail probability**
Government exerts too much control	GMs	**3.60**	0.96	3.58	**.000**
	NDs	3.05	1.03		
FCC regulations are too stringent	GMs	**3.24**	0.94	2.74	**.007**
	NDs	2.85	0.89		
The fairness doctrine should be reinstated	GMs	2.72	1.07	1.03	n.s.
	NDs	2.55	1.01		
Out-takes on news stories should be privileged	GMs	3.62	1.05	-1.11	n.s.
	NDs	3.79	0.95		
A ban on indecent programs is good for broadcasting	GMs	**3.50**	1.27	2.66	**.009**
	NDs	2.99	1.21		
Stations should be free to make all programming decisions	GMs	3.75	0.98	-0.46	n.s.
	NDs	3.82	1.03		
The public is the best judge on whether a program is too violent	GMs	3.32	1.16	-0.50	n.s.
	NDs	3.41	1.10		

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* The five-point scale was: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neutral; 2 = disagree; and 1 = strongly disagree.

** The sample sizes for each group were: General Managers (N=96) and News Directors (N=73). The pre-set level of statistical significance was the conventional .05 test.

TABLE 2: General Manager and News Director Views on Broadcast Regulation

Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N
Government exerts too much control	GM	1 (1.0%)	11 (11.5%)	31 (32.3%)	35 (36.5%)	18 (18.8%)	96
	ND	2 (2.7%)	21 (28.8%)	30 (41.1%)	11 (15.1%)	9 (12.3%)	73
FCC regulations are too stringent	GM	1 (1.0%)	22 (22.9%)	34 (35.4%)	31 (32.3%)	8 (8.3%)	96
	ND	2 (2.7%)	25 (34.2%)	32 (43.8%)	10 (13.7%)	4 (5.5%)	73
The fairness doctrine should be reinstated	GM	13 (13.5%)	28 (29.2%)	33 (34.4%)	17 (17.7%)	5 (5.2%)	96
	ND	14 (19.7%)	16 (22.5%)	30 (42.3%)	10 (14.1%)	1 (1.4%)	71
Out-takes on news stories should be privileged	GM	2 (2.1%)	11 (11.7%)	31 (33.0%)	27 (28.7%)	23 (24.5%)	94
	ND	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.6%)	23 (31.9%)	25 (34.7%)	19 (26.4%)	72
A ban on indecent programs is good for broadcasting	GM	7 (7.3%)	17 (17.7%)	20 (20.8%)	25 (26.0%)	27 (28.1%)	96
	ND	8 (11.0%)	20 (27.4%)	19 (26.0%)	17 (23.3%)	9 (12.3%)	73
Stations should be free to make all programming	GM	3 (3.1%)	9 (9.4%)	16 (16.7%)	49 (51.0%)	19 (19.8%)	96
	ND	0 (0.0%)	11 (15.1%)	13 (17.8%)	27 (37.0%)	22 (30.1%)	73
The public is the best judge on whether a program is too violent	GM	9 (9.4%)	14 (14.6%)	23 (24.0%)	37 (38.5%)	13 (13.5%)	96
	ND	3 (4.1%)	14 (19.2%)	18 (24.7%)	26 (35.6%)	12 (16.4%)	73

TABLE 3

Comparison of General Manager and News Director Responses on their views about Society

Statements	Group	Means*	S.D.	t Value	2-tail probability**
Less regulation of business is good for the USA	GMs	**3.71**	0.97	4.28	.000
	NDs	3.04	1.03		
Private enterprise is fair to workers	GMs	**3.79**	0.82	5.20	.000
	NDs	3.11	0.87		
A woman has the right to decide about an abortion	GMs	3.35	1.46	-1.35	n.s.
	NDs	3.65	1.39		
Taxes need to be raised to cut the budget deficit	GMs	2.64	1.25	-0.77	n.s.
	NDs	2.79	1.26		
Environmental problems are overstated	GMs	2.37	1.10	0.82	n.s
	NDs	2.24	1.00		
Social programs should be cut, not defense spending	GMs	**2.51**	1.03	2.75	.007
	NDs	2.08	0.93		
Politicians cannot be trusted	GMs	3.26	0.92	1.58	n.s.
	NDs	3.03	0.93		
Farm subsidies should be eliminated	GMs	2.78	1.00	1.21	n.s.
	NDs	2.60	0.90		
National news media coverage is biased	GMs	**3.36**	1.05	2.85	.005
	NDs	2.89	1.06		
Labor unions do not serve the best interests of workers	GMs	**3.67**	0.87	3.83	.000
	NDs	3.14	0.92		

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* The five-point scale was: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neutral; 2 = disagree; and 1 = strongly disagree.

** The sample sizes for each group were: General Managers (N=96) and News Directors (N=72). The pre-set level of statistical significance was the conventional .05 test.

TABLE 4: General Manager and News Director Views on Political and Social Issues

Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N
Less regulation of business is good for the USA	GM	3 (3.2%)	9 (9.5%)	17 (17.9%)	50 (52.6%)	16 (16.8%)	95
	ND	4 (5.6%)	18 (25.0%)	27 (37.5%)	17 (23.6%)	6 (8.3%)	72
Private enterprise is fair to workers	GM	1 (1.0%)	7 (7.3%)	17 (17.7%)	57 (59.4%)	14 (14.6%)	96
	ND	2 (2.8%)	14 (19.4%)	33 (45.8%)	20 (27.8%)	3 (4.2%)	72
A woman has the right to decide about an abortion	GM	18 (19.1%)	10 (10.6%)	12 (12.8%)	29 (30.9%)	25 (26.6%)	94
	ND	8 (11.1%)	8 (11.1%)	13 (18.1%)	15 (20.8%)	28 (38.9%)	72
Taxes need to be raised to cut the budget deficit	GM	19 (20.0%)	34 (35.8%)	9 (9.5%)	28 (29.5%)	5 (5.3%)	95
	ND	10 (13.9%)	25 (34.7%)	17 (23.6%)	10 (13.9%)	10 (13.9%)	72
Environmental problems are overstated	GM	20 (21.3%)	42 (44.7%)	11 (11.7%)	19 (20.2%)	2 (2.1%)	94
	ND	14 (19.4%)	39 (54.2%)	10 (13.9%)	6 (8.3%)	3 (4.2%)	72
Social programs should be cut, not defense spending	GM	15 (16.0%)	37 (39.4%)	23 (24.5%)	17 (18.1%)	2 (2.1%)	94
	ND	19 (26.4%)	35 (48.6%)	13 (18.1%)	3 (4.2%)	2 (2.8%)	72
Politicians cannot be trusted	GM	2 (2.2%)	15 (16.1%)	42 (45.2%)	25 (26.9%)	9 (9.7%)	93
	ND	2 (2.8%)	19 (26.8%)	29 (40.8%)	17 (23.9%)	4 (5.6%)	71
Farm subsidies should be eliminated	GM	8 (8.4%)	32 (33.7%)	32 (33.7%)	19 (20.0%)	4 (4.2%)	95
	ND	6 (8.3%)	29 (40.3%)	27 (37.5%)	8 (11.1%)	2 (2.8%)	72
National news media coverage is biased	GM	3 (3.2%)	19 (20.0%)	27 (28.4%)	33 (34.7%)	13 (13.7%)	95
	ND	4 (5.6%)	25 (34.7%)	25 (34.7%)	11 (15.3%)	7 (9.7%)	72
Labor unions do not serve the best interests of workers	GM	1 (1.1%)	5 (5.3%)	35 (36.8%)	37 (38.9%)	17 (17.9%)	95
	ND	0 (0.0%)	18 (25.0%)	34 (47.2%)	12 (16.7%)	5 (11.1%)	72

APPENDIX

Correlation Matrix of Broadcast Manager Responses to Views about Broadcast Regulation and Government

Var	Govt ctrl	FCC regs	Fair Dctr	Outs prvg	Inde ban	Prgm frdm	Viol judg	Less regs	Priv ent	Abrt rght	Tax rais	Envr prob	Soc cuts	Pol trst	Farm subs	Medi bias	Labr unns
Gvtc	----	.73*	-.13	.16*	.07	.22*	.20*	.37*	.17*	.06	-.01	.11	.16*	.16*	.07	.10	.19*
FCCr		----	-.13	.13	.00	.22*	.27*	.36*	.11	.08	-.01	.07	.14	.09	.04	.10	.12
Fair			----	-.18*	.19*	-.24*	-.19*	-.12	-.11	.01	-.07	-.08	.00	-.01	-.14	-.03	-.11
Outs				----	-.24*	.13	.18*	.11	.04	.15	.26*	.02	-.14	-.10	-.12	-.04	.10
Indb					----	-.38*	-.26*	-.03	.08	-.38*	-.13	.19*	.29*	.17*	.03	.06	.10
Prgm						----	.48*	.23*	.15	.21*	-.06	.00	-.02	.12	.07	.17*	.11
Viol							----	.26*	.11	.23*	.07	-.06	.08	-.05	.09	-.02	.03
Lssr								----	.59*	-.09	-.16*	.34*	.37*	.11	.13	.28*	.35*
Priv									----	-.26*	-.21*	.29*	.47*	.08	.21*	.21*	.39*
Abrt										----	.19*	-.21*	-.28*	-.10	-.09	-.18*	-.22*
Taxr											----	-.17*	-.30*	-.18*	.00	-.24*	-.16*
Envr												----	.45*	-.03	.11	.21*	.29*
Socc													----	.11	.20*	.15*	.26*
Pltr														----	.20*	.33*	.23*
Farm															----	.14	.09
Bias																----	.34*
Unns																	----

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* Pearson correlation coefficients were significant in a 2-tailed test at the .05 level (N=179).